

Walter Sablinsky

# The Road to Bloody Sunday

*Father Gapon and the St. Petersburg  
Massacre of 1905*



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**For Content, Theodore, and Valerie**





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## *Preface*

The year 1905 was a critical one in the history of Russia. During that year the subjects of the emperor shook the very foundations of the state and came close to toppling over the whole structure of the autocratic empire. The monarchy survived, but only for another twelve years. The revolution of 1905 set the patterns and unleashed the forces that triumphed in 1917.

This study deals with the opening phase of this revolutionary year, the massacre of unarmed workers on Sunday, January ninth (or January twenty-second in New Style), as they strove in vain to petition their monarch to accept from them a list of their grievances. Ironically the workers were organized and led by an Orthodox priest, Father Georgii Gapon, and they either supported or belonged to a labor organization patronized by the police authorities in St. Petersburg.

I have tried to shed some light on the personality of the mercurial priest whose personality is irrevocably linked to the labor organization which he founded, and the events that led to Bloody Sunday—as January ninth became known. The evolution of the organization he founded is traced as well as its relations with the authorities, political movements and events in Russia that preceded Bloody Sunday. Finally, the discussion turns to the impact of Bloody Sunday on the workers of St. Petersburg and the lower classes of Russia, who were stunned by the spectacle of imperial troops shooting down unarmed workers led by a man of God. This event played a crucial role in turning the lower classes of Russia away from their tsar and allowed the revolutionaries to identify him personally with the regime and hold him personally responsible for its shortcomings.

## PREFACE

I have relied in this study primarily on published material that has appeared in the press in abundance since 1905. This is supplemented by archival materials in a number of archives outside the Soviet Union. I am particularly indebted to the Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture at Columbia University and its curator, L. F. Magerovsky, as well as to the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace for their kindness in allowing me access to their files of the Okhrana and the B. I. Nikolaevsky archives. I am also indebted to the Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement in the name of Franz Kurskii in New York and to the International Institut voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam for providing me with some indispensable information. My thanks are due to the staffs of the University of California (Berkeley), Columbia University, Tulane University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, the University of Chicago, Hoover and the University of Virginia libraries, the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress for their assistance in my research.

I owe a particular debt to my teachers who taught me what I know about Russian history and who guided my initial research, Professors Martin Malia and Nicholas V. Riasanovsky of the University of California. I am deeply grateful for the intellectual stimulation provided by the fellowship of the Inter-University Project on the History of Menshevism under the direction of Professor Leopold H. Haimson. My interest in 1905 was stimulated by my participation in the Project and the study was first suggested by Solomon M. Schwarz who willingly gave his time and his familiarity with the subject to add depth to my study. He arranged for interviews with surviving participants of the events, particularly Ludwig G. Gerb, who was actively involved in Gapon's organization in the fateful January days of 1905. The seminars of the Project were an invaluable experience, and although I take full responsibility for the views expressed here, I owe much to the provocative discussions with the participants. I would like to remember par-

ticularly Lydia Osipovna Dan, Rafael Abramovich Abramovich and Georgii Iakovlevich Aronson, among many others to whom collectively I owe a great debt. The factual and bibliographical knowledge of Boris I. Nikolaevsky and Anna M. Bouguina were also invaluable assets. My colleagues on the Project, Ladis K. Kristoff and Allan K. Wildman, argued with me throughout the inception of the study, helping me to shape its outlines.

I wish to express my gratitude to many of my colleagues who patiently heard me expounding my views to them and by judicious questioning kept me within limits of sanity, and to many others who read the entire, or parts, of the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. Among the many I would like to thank Jeremiah Schneiderman, Herman Freudenberger, Thomas Hammond and Woodford McClellan for their time and patience, helpful advice and encouragement.

I am deeply grateful to the Russian Institute of Columbia University and its Director, Marshall Shulman, for offering me a Senior Fellowship to prepare the study for publication. Professors Leopold H. Haimson and Loren Graham of the Institute saw the book taking shape and their support and encouragement helped bring it to completion. My heartfelt thanks go to Elaine B. Ulman of the Institute who edited and typed the manuscript. My many thanks go as well to another editor of the Institute, Nora B. Beason, and the editor of the Princeton University Press, Margot Cutter, for their help in the book's final stages of completion.

I am also indebted to the University of Virginia and the National Endowment for the Humanities for supporting my research through summer stipends. Last but not least I would like to thank my wife for having patiently suffered in the course of the progression of this work, devoting countless hours to typing and never failing in understanding and words of encouragement.

*December 1975*



## The Road to Bloody Sunday





## Introduction: *St. Petersburg Workers before 1905*

In Russia, fortunately, there is no working class in the Western sense; therefore, there is no labor problem.

From a circular of the ministry  
of finance, 1895

The history of Russia in the final decades of the imperial period is intrinsically linked to the course of that nation's rapid industrial development and its social, economic, and political ramifications. It could safely be said that everything in Russia, from life in the peasant huts to life in the palaces, was in some way affected by the new forces shaping Russian society. The Russian proletariat, a product of industrial growth, emerged in the course of the nineteenth century as a new class requiring adjustment and integration into the existing social structure. This process, characterized by the displacement of large bodies of the peasantry moving into the cities in search of employment, imposed a tremendous strain on the traditional patterns of Russian life. Working in the primitive conditions of early industrialization, the peasant newcomers were confronted by unfamiliar social relationships, a frustrating regime of factory discipline, and the distressing conditions of urban life. Russian society offered the new social group no means to redress its grievances. As a result, the dissatisfaction of the workers bubbled to the surface in sporadic outbreaks of unrest—the faster the pace of industrial development, the greater the pressure of latent discontent.<sup>1</sup> How to recognize

Short titles are used throughout the footnotes. Full bibliographic data are given in the bibliography.

<sup>1</sup> Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, p. 184. The same authors, in "The Labour Problem in Economic

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and satisfy the needs of the growing labor force was a dilemma that racked the Russian autocracy until its final days.

The working class began to emerge as a socially significant force during the period of industrial expansion that followed the emancipation of the peasantry in 1861. Prior to the emancipation, industrial workers were usually serfs either working in the factories of their masters or paying quit-rent to their masters from wages earned in factories. Their masters retained complete authority and legal control over them. Workers in the cities, still tied to the landowners' estates, were not separated from the peasant masses. In most cases they remained in the cities only temporarily, returning to the villages when their work was required on the land. Until the emancipation, most of the working class was made up of seasonal workers (*otkhodniki*) who left their villages for certain periods to seek additional income in the factories.

This transient labor force never established deep roots in the towns. Peasants working in the factories were heavily exploited and, like serfs, had no means of redress. Despite the frightful conditions under which they worked and lived, the pittance they received as wages was a significant addition to their income from the land. The poverty of the villages compelled them to seek this additional employment and to tolerate the miserable conditions of factory life. Perhaps the knowledge that they would eventually return to their village homes and families made life in the factories more bearable.

Although the emancipation settlement perpetuated significant restraints to peasant mobility, it nevertheless provided better opportunities for peasants to work in the cities

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Development," p. 230, wrote: "Industrialization makes universal demands: it requires a basic change in the relationships between man and his work and inevitably between man and his cultural setting. This is the genesis of the labor problem in economic development." Labor protest and unrest are inherent in this adjustment. See also Gaston Rimlinger, "Autocracy and the Factory Order in Early Russian Industrialization," p. 67.

and thus make possible the emergence of a permanent working class in urban areas. The increased mobility of the peasant population, the breakdown of ties to the land, and the growth of the Russian population in the period following the emancipation were principal factors contributing to rapid industrial development.<sup>2</sup> The population of the European provinces of Russia in 1863 was slightly over 61 million (74 million for the whole empire); by the time of the census of 1897, it had increased to 93.78 million and by 1905 to 107.4 million. In the period 1863 to 1905, the population of European Russia increased by approximately 70 percent, with an annual increase of about 1.5 percent.<sup>3</sup> Most significant in these figures was the growth of the urban population, particularly the working class. In 1863, city dwellers accounted for 6.1 million or 9.9 percent of the population of European Russia, while by 1897 their number had risen to 12 million, or 12.8 percent; i.e. while the rural population rose by 48.5 percent, its urban counterpart increased by 97 percent.<sup>4</sup> The distribution of this urban population growth in the period of economic boom during the 1890s was primarily concentrated around certain industries and in specific geographic areas.

Although Russia's industrial expansion in the 1890s was impressive, it was still primarily an agricultural country. As late as 1914, over 85 percent of the population was still rural. Industry, employing only 5 percent of the entire labor force, accounted for approximately one-fifth of the income, while the agricultural sector, engaging two-thirds of the labor force, accounted for one-half of the national income. Just before World War I, Russian agriculture was

<sup>2</sup> Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let*, pp. 48, 225, and in the introduction by S. G. Strumilin, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> Liashchenko, *Istoriia narodnogo khoziaistva SSSR*, p. 28, and Lenin, *Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii* (1899) in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3, pp. 558-559. (All citations from Lenin are given from the fifth edition of his works, Moscow, 1958-1965.) Both Lenin and Liashchenko used data from the *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii*, vols. 1 and 11 (St. Petersburg, 1897), issued by the *Tsentral'nyi statisticheskii komitet*.

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still producing more than twice the value of industrial goods.<sup>5</sup> While the industrial sector of the Russian economy showed vigorous growth, its agricultural sector lagged far behind, barely keeping up with the increase in population. Indices of total economic growth are less impressive than the more frequently cited data for the industrial sector alone.<sup>6</sup>

The unbalanced nature of the Russian economy and the state policy of promoting industrialization placed a heavy burden on the agricultural sector, particularly on the peasantry. Tied to the commune and heavily taxed, the ever-increasing rural population lacked the investment capital needed to make appreciable improvements in land productivity. Whatever surplus the peasant produced was taxed away and channeled into the favored industrial sector. The disparity of prices for industrial goods and agricultural products further contributed to the misery of the rural population. This was the price Russia paid to overcome backwardness.<sup>7</sup> In the words of the principal architect of Russian industrialization, Minister of Finance Sergei Witte, "The Russian peasant paid for industrialization not from surplus but out of current necessities."<sup>8</sup> Overpopulation and depressed conditions in the countryside filled the peasants with a sense of futility and bitterness. Compelled to supplement their meager earnings from the land, they flooded the cities in search of work. The misery of factory life further

<sup>5</sup> Antsiferov, *et al.*, *Russian Agriculture during the War*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Goldsmith, "The Economic Growth of Tsarist Russia, 1860-1913," particularly p. 443.

<sup>7</sup> Von Laue, *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia*, p. 273, citing figures from Liashchenko, p. 69 (who in turn cited Lenin's *Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii*), showed that production of grain and potatoes in Russia between 1861 and 1900 increased twice as fast as the population, concluding "it would seem then that the Russian people were eating better." Neither Liashchenko nor Lenin would have subscribed to this conclusion; and even Von Laue referred, in "The High Cost and the Gamble of the Witte System," p. 441, to the "deep-seated crisis of Russian agriculture at the end of the nineteenth century" and the "deplorable state of Russian agriculture."

<sup>8</sup> Von Laue, "The High Cost and Gamble of the Witte System," p. 444.

reinforced their long-standing hatred of the existing social system.

The abundance of cheap labor was an advantage to the employers. The labor force, lacking in skills and education, was fluid in its composition, and workers were prone to frequent absenteeism and poor discipline. To compensate for the low qualifications of the work force, entrepreneurs substituted capital for labor, importing quantities of modern machinery concentrated in large production units.<sup>9</sup> As a result, industry in Russia relied extensively on masses of unskilled labor while a small, skilled group of workers handled the machinery. These paradoxical policies led to the construction of large, modern plants, but perpetuated the backward state of the majority of industrial workers. Consequently, an inordinate number of workers were employed in large industrial units with distinct stratification between the few better-paid, skilled artisans and the multitude of poorly paid, unskilled laborers.

The influx of peasants into the urban centers accounted for most of the expansion of the working class, as well as for the increase in the urban population. In addition, a growing proportion of the urban population lived in large cities, some of which increased several times over during the last decades of the nineteenth century. A relatively small number of cities, thirty in all, contained about 40 percent of the entire urban population of the empire, and their populations grew at a considerably higher rate than the population of Russia as a whole. For example, peasants made up over 35 percent of the population of St. Petersburg in the 1860s. By 1900 peasants accounted for 908.7 thousand, or 63.1 percent, of the city's population, adding over a quarter of a million to the city rolls in the 1890s alone. Of this number, 78.1 percent (718.4 thousand) had been born outside the St. Petersburg *guberniia* (province). By 1902, the St. Pe-

<sup>9</sup> Gerschenkron, "Russia: Patterns of Economic Development," in *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays*, p. 127. This article first appeared under the title "Problems and Patterns of Russian Economic Development," in Black, ed., *The Transformation of Russian Society*.

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tersburg *guberniia* listed 90 percent of its working class as migrants from other provinces.<sup>10</sup>

The expansion of large industrial units paralleled the growth of major cities, and indeed larger industrial units in Russia increased at a considerably higher rate than those in the West. In 1879 only 7 percent of the enterprises in Russia employed over a thousand workers, 32.8 percent of the entire industrial labor force.<sup>11</sup> In the period 1879-1902 (which includes the years of the economic boom), the number of enterprises employing between one hundred and five hundred workers increased by 78.3 percent, and their labor force by 76 percent, while those employing over a thousand

<sup>10</sup> Rashin, *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa*, table on p. 362. The city census of 1900 gave 78.1 percent of the workers in St. Petersburg as newcomers from other provinces (Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune pervoi russkoi revoliutsii*, p. 40).

<sup>11</sup> The term "worker" presents a special problem in Russian historiography. It could mean anyone working for a wage, including agricultural laborers. Using this definition Lenin estimated that in the beginning of the 1890s there were 10 million workers in Russia. Rashin gave the figure as 9,153,000 with the following breakdown:

	Total workers	Percent of total
Labor force in mining, manufacturing, transportation, construction and trade	3,221,600	35.2
Unskilled and day laborers	1,094,800	12.0
Agricultural laborers	2,722,600	29.7
Janitors	555,000	6.1
House servants	1,557,600	17.0

Rashin, "O chislennosti i territorial'nom razmeshchenii rabochikh v period kapitalizma," p. 162. See also Pogozhev, *Uchet chislennosti i sostava rabochikh v Rossii*, p. 7.

The term "industrial worker" as used in Russian sources applies to wage earners in enterprises supervised by the factory and mining inspectorates, in addition to those employed by the railroad industry. In 1900 the factory inspectorate reported 1,692,300 workers under its supervision; the mining inspectorate 662,200, and the railroads 554,400, for a total of 2,908,700 "industrial workers" (Rashin, *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa*, pp. 30 and 117). However, the official statistics do not include workers in enterprises not covered by the inspectorates, such as state-owned enterprises, construction industry, and enterprises employing less than fifty workers. If these are included, then the industrial force in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century was in excess of 3.3 million (Rashin, "O chislennosti i territorial'nom razmeshchenii rabochikh," p. 128).

increased by 203.5 percent and their labor force by 284.4 percent.<sup>12</sup>

The average annual wage of Russian industrial workers in 1904 was 213.9 rubles,<sup>13</sup> but wages varied extensively according to locality and type of industry. The average wages in large, major industrial plants were higher than those in textile mills and food-processing enterprises. Skilled workers in the metal industries and in skilled trades such as printing received the highest earnings. However, even in these favored industries, wages barely provided for a subsistence existence. Even workers receiving over 450 rubles annually were constantly in debt. It has been estimated that in 1905-1906 a 400-ruble minimum annual income was required to maintain a family in the city; yet, as late as 1912, 80 percent of the workers in St. Petersburg earned only 35 rubles a month.<sup>14</sup> The disparity in wages is evident from a survey conducted in 1901 among the workers in the metal industries. The survey showed that the Putilov Works, the largest plant in Russia, employing close to twelve thousand workers, paid the highest average daily wage (1.85 rubles), but 74.84 percent of its workers received less than a ruble a day.<sup>15</sup> In the textile industry the wages were much lower, between 20 and 30 rubles a month; women and children received even less. Long hours, poor sanitary conditions, and the absence of safety precautions compounded the miserable existence of Russian workers at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It would be wrong, however, to treat the Russian working class as a homogeneous social group. From the very beginning, socio-economic and cultural differences produced significant stratification between the masses of unskilled workers, barely surviving in squalid warrens, and the skilled workers able to afford a more comfortable life. As increasing numbers of workers took up permanent resi-

<sup>12</sup> Liashchenko, pp. 147-148.

<sup>13</sup> Strumilin, "Oplata promyshlennykh rabochikh," p. 319.

<sup>14</sup> Kruze and Kutsentov, "Naselenie Peterburga," p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> Blek, "Usloviia truda na peterburgskikh zavodakh," table on p. 66.

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dency in the cities, there gradually developed an urbanized working-class elite. At the turn of the century this skilled elite, or "labor aristocracy" as it was called, constituted only 4 percent of the industrial labor force and earned between 600 and 700 rubles annually.<sup>16</sup>

The differences between the labor aristocracy and the masses of unskilled workers were not only economic. The views and attitudes of the two groups differed greatly—from the irreverence and political radicalism of the more sophisticated workers, who were affected by revolutionary propaganda, to the extreme conservatism and backwardness of newly arrived peasants. The majority of unskilled workers were discomforted by the profound transformations the urban factory environment worked on their traditional ways of thinking. They sensed, with vague uneasiness, that the traditional values of peasant life did not suit their new role as factory workers. Proletarian life demanded another set of rules to live by, some framework to make the harsh, callous industrial world sensible and give a measure of human dignity to their lives. The labor aristocracy had already begun to establish itself in the urban world, but the longings of the working masses remained incoherent, pent-up and unrealized. Still, the heritage of a peasant background, the experience of a difficult adjustment to urban life, and the need for joint struggle to improve working conditions bound the labor aristocracy to the unskilled masses. In the great urban centers, where the labor force and complicated production processes were concentrated, the skilled workers gradually began to respond to the common need. Influenced by educational and ideological training, they began to expound a conscious, proletarian world view.

St. Petersburg, the largest city and the major industrial complex of the Russian empire, was surrounded by a smol-

<sup>16</sup> Netesin, "K voprosu o sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh korniakh i osobennostiakh 'rabochei aristokratii' v Rossii," p. 208. The labor aristocracy in England comprised 15 percent of the labor force, in Germany 9 percent.



dering ring of metal-processing plants, textile mills, and factories. The administrative, as well as commercial and cultural, center of the vast empire, St. Petersburg also boasted the largest working-class population. By the beginning of the century its population was 1,439,613, of which 287,886 could be classified as workers.<sup>17</sup> Adding to this the members of workers' families gives slightly over 30 percent as the estimated proletarian component of the population.<sup>18</sup> Although the economic recession of the first three years of the twentieth century affected the St. Petersburg economy severely, the defense-oriented industries of the capital revived dramatically after the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. At the end of 1904, the number of workers employed in St. Petersburg was approximately 250 to 260 thousand.<sup>19</sup> According to the census of 1910, only 10.5 percent returned to their villages for summer work,<sup>20</sup> but a considerable number of those who remained in the city held land in villages, maintained families there, and insisted on being designated as peasants in official inquiries.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 26. The term "worker" used in statistics on St. Petersburg includes all categories of workers employed in industrial and manufacturing enterprises, but excludes those classified as "self-employed" such as tailors, shoemakers, cab drivers, unskilled laborers hired on a daily basis, house servants and others. The official figures of the factory inspectorate give 154,152 as the number of industrial workers in St. Petersburg as of December 1904. See Russia, Ministerstvo trgovli i promyshlennosti. Otdel promyshlennosti, *Svod otchetov fabrichnykh inspektorov za 1904 god* (St. Petersburg, 1907), table v. For a discussion of relative reliability of various data on the population of St. Petersburg, see Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, chapter 1, pp. 10ff. and *idem*, "Sostav i polozhenie rabochikh Peterburga po dannym gorodskikh perepisei," pp. 394-403; and Bernshtein-Kogan, *Chislennost', sostav i polozhenie peterburgskikh rabochikh*, chapter 1, pp. 1-22.

<sup>18</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. During the Russo-Japanese War there was an extensive turnover among the workers in St. Petersburg; see Moizhes, "Polozhenie peterburgskogo proletariata," p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Poor soil and distance from their villages tended to reduce St. Petersburg workers ties to the land. See Rashin, *Formirovanie rabochego klassa*, pp. 570-571.

<sup>21</sup> Pogozev, p. xiv, note 1.

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The wages in St. Petersburg were consistently higher than in most parts of Russia, averaging 336.17 rubles annually in 1904 (compared to 213.92 for European Russia as a whole).<sup>22</sup> The cost of living in the capital was also higher, and earning extra income from the land was difficult. The wages of most workers barely reached subsistence level, and even the better-paid workers had to borrow or find extra work to make ends meet. In 1902 the administrations of state-owned plants engaged in defense production undertook an extensive survey to determine the budgetary requirements for workers in St. Petersburg. According to their estimations, a single worker required the following monthly minimum:

	Food	Lodg- ing	Cloth- ing	Pocket Expenses	Incidental Expenses
Male worker	10	4	3	2.50	1.50
Female worker	8	4	2	2	1

Consequently, single male workers required 21 rubles a month and female workers 17 rubles minimum.<sup>23</sup> It was also estimated that a worker supporting a family of four had to earn at least 51 rubles a month.<sup>24</sup>

From these figures it is evident that wages of less than a ruble a day forced workers to deny themselves and their families basic necessities. The housing situation in St. Petersburg was particularly deplorable. The sum of 4 rubles paid only for a bed or a "corner" in a dormitory or private apartment, usually the cellar. The prevailing rents in St. Petersburg were excessively high—a two-room apartment in the central part of the city rented for nearly 30 rubles a month, clearly beyond the reach of workers, who had to seek housing in working-class districts and suburbs. The

<sup>22</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 80, uses the figures of the commission. The data of the commission were published in Lisovskii, *Rabochie v voennom vedomstve*.

<sup>24</sup> Druzhinin, ed., *Usloviia byta rabochikh v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii*, pp. 10 and 55-58. This study is an analysis of budgetary surveys conducted in prerevolutionary Russia.

population increase in St. Petersburg, particularly among the working classes, far outstripped the construction of new housing. As a result, in the working-class quarters the average density of individuals per room in some districts was close to five, and workers often rented a portion of a room, a bed, or even part of a bed.<sup>25</sup> Tenements and basements were filled to capacity. Each family had a "corner," partitioned by curtains, where husband and wife occupied a bed, with a child or two sleeping at their feet and an infant in a cradle hung from the ceiling.<sup>26</sup> A survey of a working-class quarter (Vyborg district) covering 1,121 individuals counted 459 beds among them: "There were cases where three or four, even five individuals occupied one bed."<sup>27</sup> The percentage of "corner" dwellers rose as high as 15.7 in the Neva district (Aleksandro-Nevskii district, as it was officially called), with an average of 1.8 individuals per bed. In Narva district the density of individuals per bed was 2.4.<sup>28</sup>

Close to half of the industrial labor force in St. Petersburg was employed in the metal-processing and machine industries. The second largest contingent of workers, about one-half the number of metal workers, was employed in the textile industry. Wages and working conditions in the two industries offer a sharp contrast. The average annual wage for metal workers was 407.5 rubles, while the textile workers earned 231.1 rubles.<sup>29</sup> Workers in the metal industries were predominantly male, better educated, skilled, and considerably more urbanized. Textile mills made heavy use of unskilled labor, women (56.6 percent), and children,

<sup>25</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, table on pp. 150-151.

<sup>26</sup> Prokopovich, *Biudzhety peterburgskikh rabochikh*, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> M. I. Pokrovskaia, "O zhilishchakh peterburgskikh rabochikh," *Vestnik obshchestvennoi gigieny i prakticheskoi meditsiny* (March, 1898), cited in Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 162. The survey was conducted in 1895-1896, and housing did not improve in succeeding years.

<sup>28</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, table on p. 161. An interesting survey of workers' housing in St. Petersburg was discussed by Pokrovskaia, "Peterburgskie rabochie i ikh ekonomicheskoe polozhenie," pp. 323-342.

<sup>29</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 61.

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who worked long hours in deplorable conditions for wages that were often below subsistence level. Competition for unskilled jobs was vicious. Skilled workers were in demand and had a certain degree of job security, but for untrained laborers the threat of dismissal was an ever present factor. In 1904 alone the police deported two hundred thousand individuals from the capital, most of them unemployed and without proper papers.<sup>30</sup>

Because much of the industry in the capital was technologically quite advanced, the working class in St. Petersburg contained a large segment of better-paid, skilled workers. Its literacy level was well above the average for Russia as a whole, and considerably higher than that of workers in other parts of Russia. According to the 1897 census only 29.3 percent of the male population of Russia was literate (13.1 percent for women), as compared to 59.9 of the male workers (34.9 for females), and 77.6 of the male workers in St. Petersburg (40.8 for women).<sup>31</sup> A significant proportion of these literate workers took advantage of their status and skills to acquire additional knowledge, joined study circles, became interested in politics, and were gradually drawn into contact with the revolutionary movement through the radical intelligentsia.

The combination of skills, education, and economic advantages set the trained "labor aristocracy" apart from the masses of less fortunate "gray" workers. Nevertheless, the skilled workers were not integrated into the middle-class intelligentsia, and a strong sense of hostility prevailed in relations between workers and the intelligentsia. Even the most advanced workers were slow to overcome their mistrust of the intelligentsia, a legacy of peasant attitudes toward the upper classes. They suspected radical intellectuals

<sup>30</sup> From a police report cited in *Ocherki istorii Leningrada*, vol. III, p. 229.

<sup>31</sup> Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, pp. 53ff., and Rashin, *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa*, p. 580. Only a small percentage of workers completed primary education; most learned to read and write (often only to read) on their own.

were more interested in attaining political goals than in improving working conditions. Frequently the interests of skilled workers did not go beyond personal comfort and privileges, but, since Russia offered no legal means to achieve even these limited goals, the more active workers inevitably became involved in underground activities.<sup>32</sup>

By contrast, the masses of Russian workers retained the traditional values of their peasant heritage: staunch conservatism, devout Orthodoxy, fervent faith in the autocracy, subservience to authority, and indifference to political life. They endured the hardships and abuses of working in the factories with helpless resignation, occasionally exploding in spontaneous, violent attacks reminiscent of the peasant rebellions or *bunty* which periodically erupted in the Russian countryside. The radical intelligentsia, first through Populist propaganda and later through Social Democratic appeals, attempted to focus the diffused discontent of the working class and give the uprooted peasants a purpose, direction, and an ideological framework to apply within the

<sup>32</sup> The traditional view pictures trade unionism as a product of the workers' own initiative: left to themselves, workers become engaged in trade union activity directed primarily toward economic issues. The Socialist movement, by contrast, is considered a political movement of the intelligentsia directed toward political ends. Richard Pipes, in his study *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement 1885-1897*, p. 117, draws a sharp distinction between the two: these "were two separate and distinct movements. Though they cooperated on many occasions, the two never merged." This view might have been correct if the two movements had been allowed to go their own separate ways. But in Russia there was no legal possibility for trade union activity, and consequently all such activity, particularly strikes, was considered political and punished as such. Under such conditions trade union activities in Russia were very quickly drawn into the political arena to seek political solutions. Wildman, *The Making of the Workers' Revolution*, is correct in emphasizing the connection between Social Democracy and the labor movement in Russia; see pp. 29 and 102, and p. xxi of the introduction by Haimson. Von Laue, in "Tsarist Labor Policy," p. 136, wrote that the Russian workers were driven to the conclusion "that the only road to a better life led through the Winter Palace. The existing situation left them no choice but to convert the economic struggle into a political one."

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urban setting. Through their efforts the factory laborers came to identify themselves not as peasants who had lost all the attributes of peasant life, but as a new class—the proletariat.

The first inroads to the working masses were provided through members of the “labor aristocracy.” Exposed to revolutionary propaganda, these skilled workers eventually became convinced that only by joining the political struggle could they achieve the economic goals of the working class. Commenting on the labor disorders of 1901, a factory inspector noted the large number of such workers involved: “. . . the participants in the unrest were almost exclusively workers from machine industries, the so-called labor aristocracy. This class of workers, receiving better wages and benefiting from cultural influences, but denied any possibility of association in unions of some sort, is a fertile soil for outside influences. . . .”<sup>33</sup> Official documents and memoirs amply illustrate the critical role played by the “labor aristocracy” in the Russian labor movement.

Soviet historians have treated the role of the labor aristocracy with ambiguity. Lenin expressed concern lest workers who became acclimated to city life and acquired better education, skills, and wages give in to petty bourgeois tendencies and turn away from political struggle. In his later writings he denounced the labor aristocracy as traitors to the Marxist cause and “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.”<sup>34</sup> Soviet scholarship in general tends to emphasize the uniformity of the working class, disregarding the peculiarities and contradictions among its different strata. Preferring to show the development of the Russian working class as a unilinear progression from a primitive state of peasant consciousness to the advanced level of proletarian revolutionary class consciousness under the leadership of

<sup>33</sup> Cited by Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune*, p. 34; see also Tiutiukin, “O nekotorykh osobennostiakh ‘rabochei aristokratii,’” pp. 96 and 98.

<sup>34</sup> Lenin’s introduction to French and German editions of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, vol. 27, p. 308.

the Bolshevik party, Soviet historians tend to play down the abiding elements of peasant heritage in the workers' lives.<sup>35</sup> Although Lenin considered the proletariat "a separate class of the population, totally estranged from the old peasantry . . .,"<sup>36</sup> the values and habits of peasant life were in large measure preserved and adapted to the urban factory environment. The tradition of the rural commune, where decisions were made unanimously—*vsem mirom*, was evident in the unity of the Russian workers once a strike was declared.<sup>37</sup> Class identity, solidarity, genuine concern for their comrades—traits Soviet scholars invariably attribute to proletarian consciousness—can be traced back to their roots in the villages. The lack of legal status or recognition for the working class, whose very existence was accepted with great difficulty even by the educated public, tended to keep the masses of workers from realizing their identity as a separate social group.

Belated industrial development allowed Russia to draw on the experience of the West. What Russia's statesmen, thinkers, and the overwhelming majority of the educated public saw there aroused nothing but apprehension in their minds. Until the emergence of Marxists in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most Russians, from rulers to revolutionaries, were profoundly set against industrialization and considered proletarianization the ultimate degradation of the human spirit and body. Among Russian officials there were those who became so alarmed at the possible conse-

<sup>35</sup> Soviet historiography developed a whole body of scholarship dealing with the character (*oblik*) of the working class. Soviet scholars emphasize the common characteristics of the working class, excluding from *oblik* such potentially diversifying factors as national origins, professional, economic, and legal status of workers. See the discussion of the definition of *oblik* in Iu. Kir'ianov, "Ob oblike rabochego klassa Rossii," in Ivanov, ed., *Rossiiskii proletariat: oblik, bor'ba, gegemonia (sbornik)*, p. 103, and the comments from the general discussion, pp. 7-8. For further references on this subject, consult Kir'ianov and Pronina, *Oblik proletariata. Bibliografiia*.

<sup>36</sup> Lenin, *Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii*, vol. 3, p. 547.

<sup>37</sup> Shishkin, *Tak skladyvalas' revoliutsionnaia moral'*, pp. 71-74, defines the tendency to common action among the workers as a distinctly proletarian trait expressed in the principle "All for one, one for all!"

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quences of landless, pauperized workers accumulating in the cities that they were willing to curtail further economic growth. Emperor Nicholas I (1825-1855) cautioned that if industry continued to expand, dealing with restless masses of workers would be difficult: "They need energetic and paternal supervision of their morals; otherwise this mass of people will be gradually corrupted and turn into a *soslovie* (class) as miserable as they are dangerous for their masters."<sup>38</sup>

Despite the ruler's pessimistic prognostications, finance minister Count Egor F. Kankrin voiced an opinion that came to be widely accepted: the Russian worker was unique because he remained essentially a peasant. His close ties to the land, his landlord and his traditional form of life made him immune to the evils common in the West.<sup>39</sup> In 1885 the future promoter of Russian industrialization, Sergei Iu. Witte, contributed an article to a Slavophile journal concerning the prospects of economic development in Russia. He assured his readers that new economic forces did not threaten Russia's "immemorial social order" because of the peasant nature of the Russian labor force. The mentality of Russian people, he wrote, was shaped by "beautiful, exalted, and enobling work on the soil."<sup>40</sup> In 1895, Witte, then the minister of finance, sent a circular addressed to his subordinates claiming: "In Russia, fortunately, there is no working class in the Western sense, therefore, there is no labor problem."<sup>41</sup> It is surprising how

<sup>38</sup> Nicholas I quoted by Benkendorf (head of the Third Section) in "Iz zapisok grafa A. Kh. Benkendorfa," p. 38. See also discussion of the attitude of Nicholas I in Pintner, *Russian Economic Policy under Nicholas I*, p. 38.

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion of the views of the "pessimists" and the "optimists" in Zelnik, *Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia*, pp. 24-27.

<sup>40</sup> Cited by Von Laue in *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia*, p. 55.

<sup>41</sup> Ozerov, *Politika po rabochemu voprosu v Rossii za poslednie gody*, p. 25. Professor Ozerov had access to the archives of the ministry of finance. He quotes from secret circular no. 24152/5364, dated December 5, 1895. The printed copy of the circular omitted a whole paragraph cited by Ozerov. See text of the circular in *Raboochee dvizhenie v Rossii v XIX veke*, vol. IV, part 2, appendix 2, pp. 824-825.



long these untenable attitudes, formulated in the early period of industrialization, survived.

The attitudes of officials and employers, fostered during the period when most workers were serfs, continued to reflect the paternalistic relationship between master and serf long after the emancipation. The authority of the master was passed over to the employer, and officials regarded the preservation of this authority as an essential element of the autocratic structure. Workers were to be treated like peasants and their relationship with their employers was to be idyllic. As Witte described it in a set of instructions to his subordinates:

A patriarchal order of relations between owners and workers prevails in our industry. This patriarchy manifests itself in many instances in the concern of the factory owners for the needs of the workers and employees in their factories, in their solicitude for the preservation of harmony and accord, and in the simplicity and fairness of their mutual relations. When these relations are founded on the laws of morality and Christian teachings, there is no need to resort to the application of written law and compulsion.<sup>42</sup>

But the traditional relationships between the peasant and master could not be transferred easily to the harsh world of factories and urban slums. The rural way of life, with centuries of tradition behind it, accepted suffering as a burden divinely willed, an idea embedded in the Russian term for peasant, *krest'ianin*—bearer of the cross. The slow tempo of rural life was made easier by the ameliorating cohesiveness of village interrelationships. To the peasant fresh from the countryside, the new urban order appeared as a brutal and exploitative alien world. The imposition of authority, long accepted in rural life as an inevitable attribute of order, was perceived in the cities as unjustifiable arbitrariness, abuse, and lawlessness.

<sup>42</sup> *Rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii v XIX veke*, *ibid.*, p. 824.

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Although the state bureaucracy strove to represent its policy as one of paternalistic concern for workers, in fact both the legal structure and everyday practice favored employers.<sup>43</sup> The employer determined all conditions of employment and prescribed proper behavior for workers in factories, levying fines for even the smallest infraction. In his factory the employer was absolute master, and favored managerial personnel enjoyed unlimited authority over the workers. The system lent itself to wide abuse, but workers were prohibited from doing anything to redress their grievances by common action. Even complaints against obvious abuses were dealt with as disruptions of public order. The Russian term for strike, *stachka*, was derived from an old colloquial term, *stakat'sia*—to conspire for a criminal act. Russian laws dealt with strikes as criminal conspiracies and considered demands for higher pay extortion.

Despite this rigid labor policy, the tsarist response to labor unrest unwittingly promoted strikes as a useful, albeit illegal, means of struggle. Although the authorities usually intervened with stern punishments for strikers, particularly for the instigators and spokesmen of strikes, very frequently the complaints of the strikers were found to be justified, and the employers were ordered to correct abuses. Improvements in working conditions after strikes convinced the workers that their protests were effective.<sup>44</sup> From the early strikes workers learned to rely on themselves, and an internal class leadership began to develop, characterized by a high degree of responsibility and self-sacrifice. Strike leaders were invariably punished with jail sentences or exile, yet such leaders continued to emerge, often elected by the strikers themselves. While the state branded strikers as criminals and persecuted their leaders, to the workers the example of these martyred leaders became a source of inspiration.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see Rimlinger, "Autocracy and the Factory Order," p. 72. On the attitude of the ministry of finance, see Von Laue, "Tsarist Labor Policy," p. 137.

<sup>44</sup> See discussion of the strikes of the 1860s in Zelnik, pp. 161-173.

The first real manifestation of proletarian unrest, a major industrial strike in St. Petersburg in 1870, evoked anguished cries of pain from the Russian public. The conservative newspaper *Novoe vremia* expressed the prevailing attitude in the opening sentence of its lead article: "And a workers' strike has befallen us, and even we were not protected by God."<sup>45</sup> The growing involvement of workers in strike activity compelled a reluctant government to turn its attention to the labor problem. Its solution was an extension of the previous policy of autocratic paternalism. By shifting some responsibilities from the employers to the state and imposing limited controls over employment practices, the government, hoping to eliminate the more serious abuses of the factory system, became ever more embroiled in labor conflicts. Although the state conceived of itself as an impartial arbitrator, the whole autocratic system, with its inbred fear of spontaneous initiative on the part of the masses, tended to place the government on the side of the employers in any dispute.

Official labor policy was embodied in a series of enactments known collectively as "factory legislation." Although some edicts dated back to Peter the Great, and specific labor laws were issued in 1835 and 1845, none of these acquired permanent force. The first real factory legislation followed the turbulent decade of the seventies. In 1882 the government made a timid attempt to regulate labor relations by prohibiting some of the most flagrant abuses in the factories. A factory inspectorate, established to oversee enforcement of the 1882 law, attracted the service of the most dedicated and respected members of the academic community. They approached their work with considerable zeal, but their resources were meager in the face of the enormous task. Only three inspectors were appointed in 1882 to conduct a study of Russian industry until the law became effective in 1884, at which time their total number was increased to twenty. Still the number of workers and factories under their supervision was excessive. The five provinces

<sup>45</sup> Cited by S. N. Prokopovich, *K rabochemu voprosu v Rossii*, p. 49.

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of Moscow district alone contained two thousand enterprises.<sup>46</sup>

On the whole the law made little impression on the employers, and even less on the workers. The strikes reached unprecedented proportions in 1884 and 1885, when four thousand workers at the Morozov cotton mill went on strike. The extent of the unrest so alarmed officials that the arch-conservative minister of the interior, Count Dmitrii Tolstoy, personally inspected the factories on strike and, as a result, blamed the disorders squarely on the employers' unlimited abuses. He concluded that the impossibility of quelling strikes except by force of arms was "sufficient proof of the necessity to begin preparation and development . . . of regulations that would in some degree restrain the arbitrariness of factory owners and eliminate unfortunate incidents in the future. . . ."<sup>47</sup> His conclusions were echoed in the recommendations of a committee chaired by the assistant minister of the interior, Senator V. K. von Plehve. As a result, on June 3, 1886, a new law was passed which became the core of the "Industrial Code" (*Ustav o promyshlennosti*). This law, reflecting a concern for internal security, extended state paternalism to cover the responsibilities of employers. Its basic premise was that contractual obligations between workers and their employers were not just private arrangements but "matters intimately related to public order and tranquility."<sup>48</sup> The government therefore required employers to specify working conditions in writing and prohibited altering them during the period of contract. The factory inspectors, representing the state in the indus-

<sup>46</sup> Von Laue, in "Factory Inspection under the 'Witte System,'" p. 353, wrote, "Rarely, indeed, was a heavier task imposed upon so small and so ineffectual a group of officials." On the difficulties facing the factory inspectors, see recollections of one of the first to be appointed to that post, I. I. Ianzhul, in his *Iz vospominanii i perepiski fabrichnogo inspektora pervogo prizyva*, particularly pp. 76-77.

<sup>47</sup> Cited by Tugan-Baranovskii, *Russkaia fabrika v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, p. 332.

<sup>48</sup> From the explanatory note to the law of June 3, 1886, cited in Prokopovich, *K rabochemu voprosu v Rossii*, p. 87.

trial sphere, were charged primarily with the responsibility of preserving industrial peace.

Theoretically the law imposed the state's authority over a contractual relationship between legally equal parties. In reality, the workers were continually at a disadvantage. The law spelled out severe punishment for strikes: strikers were subject to imprisonment from two to four months, and strike instigators from four to eight months. Longer imprisonments and financial liability could be imposed for any damage caused by strikes. The rationale behind the prohibition of strikes was that the worker violated his contract by quitting work prior to the stipulated time. Violations by employers, however, were treated lightly. Strikes were prohibited, but lock-outs were not. For violation of contract a worker was subject to immediate arrest and summary punishment, but an employer who broke the same contract by firing a worker without due cause was punished at worst by a nominal fine.

The factory inspectorate had to rely on moral persuasion as its principal means of enforcement. A worker unjustly dismissed could appeal to a factory inspector, but the complexities and expense of prolonged litigation clearly placed the factory owners in a favored position.<sup>49</sup> Official threats against employers were seldom carried out.<sup>50</sup> The initiative remained in the hands of the employers, who usually did

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of this relationship, see Walkin, "The Attitude of the Tsarist Government Toward the Labor Problem," p. 174, particularly notes 22 and 23. The best summary of the relationship between the law and the workers is in Polianskii, "*Russkoe ugovnoe zakonodatel'stvo o stachkakh*" i drugie stat'i po ugovnomu pravu.

<sup>50</sup> For example, see the attempts by factory inspectors to impose fines on the employers: Ianzhul, pp. 184-185; Bykov, *Fabrichnoe zakonodatel'stvo i razvitie ego v Rossii*, pp. 190-191; and Von Laue, "Factory Inspection under the 'Witte System,'" pp. 359-360. In 1903 the minister of the interior, Plehve, issued a stern warning to businessmen in Moscow, threatening them with exile in Siberia if they failed to take measures to prevent strikes. In the same directive he authorized the police to exile workers who were considered unreliable by their employers. See Ozerov, p. 38. The instances of workers exiled by the police were numerous; there is no evidence that the threat against businessmen was ever carried out.

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whatever they desired with impunity. Factory regulations, which barely touched many long-standing grievances of the workers, left no legal means to protest conditions not covered under the new law. In the view of one writer, "... the law of 1886 was . . . one of those unworkable compromises between the Tsarist regime's inability and unwillingness to control the actions of the employers, beyond insisting on common decency, and its desire to protect the workers to keep their loyalty."<sup>51</sup>

Despite factory legislation, strike activity again reached alarming proportions in the 1890s, particularly with the great textile strike of 1896 in St. Petersburg. By this time the revolutionary intelligentsia, primarily the growing Marxist faction, had made inroads into the labor movement and was helping to organize strikes. The discussions of the 1896 strikes and the resulting proposals revealed diverging approaches to the labor problem within the central government. At a special conference convened on December 20, 1896, to consider legislation against labor unrest, the minister of the interior, Ivan L. Goremykin, stated that regulation of the workday alone was not sufficient. Labor unrest, he maintained, "... is the result of outside influences, and frequently occurs irrespective of internal factory conditions."<sup>52</sup> To remove revolutionary propagandists from the worker milieu, he recommended close surveillance over all aspects of workers' lives by special factory police who, in cooperation with the factory inspectors, would eliminate "all irregularities" in the factories.<sup>53</sup> The minister of finance, Witte, objected to the proposed extension of police authority into privately owned factories.<sup>54</sup> The chairman of the conference, the arch-conservative procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, sounded the old themes: not the written law, but the paternalistic sensitivity of gov-

<sup>51</sup> Rimlinger, "Autocracy and the Factory Order," p. 82.

<sup>52</sup> Russia. Ministerstvo finansov, *Materiály po izdaniiu zakona 2 i iunia 1897 goda. "Ob ogranichenii i raspredelenii rabocheho vremeni v zavedeniakh fabrichno-zavodskoi promyshlennosti,"* p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

ernment agencies dealing with factory problems would prevent future disorders.<sup>55</sup> Their deliberations resulted in the ineffectual law of June 2, 1897, restricting the workday to eleven and one-half hours. Despite its numerous loopholes, the law was a psychological victory for the strikers and the revolutionary intelligentsia.

Although arch-conservatives like Pobedonostsev continued to believe that Russian labor was unique and somehow immune from Western-style labor movements, most officials were gradually altering their views. While denying the existence of a new class or *soslovie* of workers, in practice officials began to treat the workers as a special group. Their anxious attempts to prevent the formation of a Russian working class paradoxically led to the development of a body of labor legislation which, by its very existence, admitted the development of a labor problem in Russia. By the end of the century the ministry of finance and the ministry of the interior were aligning themselves with different interests in regard to labor. Under Witte (1893-1904), the ministry of finance became increasingly involved in the promotion of industrialization. Despite his sincere concern for the welfare of workers, Witte tended to put the interests of industrialization first.<sup>56</sup> The ministry of finance promoted the interests of the factory owners in conflicts with other government agencies as well as with the workers, and the factory inspectorate found itself in an uncomfortable situation. Its meager resources, shortage of personnel, and inadequate means for enforcing regulations left it virtually powerless. Originally conceived as protectors of the workers, under Witte the factory inspectors also became agents of the ministry of finance in its policy of promoting industrialization. "The factory inspectors were now to work for the dissemination of useful technical information to the management. They became agents of industrial promotion more than of the workers' welfare."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>56</sup> Von Laue, "Tsarist Labor Policy," p. 136.

<sup>57</sup> Von Laue, *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia*, p. 97.

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The ministry of the interior, on the other hand, became concerned with labor because the growing strike movement threatened public order. In studying the problem, the ministry of the interior officials developed a deeper understanding of, and sympathy for, the workers' plight. While bent on the suppression of working-class activism, the officials also recognized the necessity of improving wretched factory conditions, if only to keep workers from falling easy prey to revolutionary propaganda. In all cases of labor disorders, however, the ministry dealt very harshly with those responsible and advocated greater control and tighter surveillance over workers.

On August 12, 1897, minister of the interior Goremykin issued a secret circular instructing provincial governors on dealing with strikes. The issuance of such secret directives had become common practice in various ministries whenever instructions contradicted existing laws or the policies of another government department. In effect, state policy was being implemented through these secret circulars, which often deviated grossly from existing legal norms.<sup>58</sup> The Goremykin circular expressed the prevailing view of the ministry of the interior that strikes were caused by deplorable conditions in the factories, conditions which were easily exploited by revolutionaries. It prescribed the establishment of an elaborate system of surveillance among the workers to prevent any contact between labor and the intelligentsia. The governors were instructed to prevent all gatherings of workers, to arrest strike instigators immediately and, when a strike occurred, to order strikers back to work on pain of immediate dismissal and deportation. The last paragraph of the circular recommended that during strikes regular legal procedures be bypassed, and strikers be subject to summary punishment without trial or investigation. One observer, who was not unsympathetic to the regime, could not but conclude, "This is a monstrous circular, violating even the most elementary personal rights."<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> See discussion in Ozerov, *op cit.* chapter 1, "Sekretnaia tsirkuliarnaia politika," pp. 23-38.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.



Such repressive measures against the workers were accompanied by constant pleas for improvements in workers' lives from the highest officials of the ministry of the interior. In 1898 the assistant chief of the corps of gendarmes, Lieutenant General A. I. Panteleev, inspected areas of recent labor unrest and submitted a lengthy report on his findings. He recommended drastic improvement of working conditions through better pay, housing, and medical care, to be provided at the expense of the wealthy factory owners. He further advised the establishment of special factory police, the cost again to be borne by the factory owners, and transfer of the factory inspectorate to the authority of the ministry of the interior.<sup>60</sup>

At a special conference called to consider these proposals, minister of finance Witte dismissed Panteleev's observations as superficial and unfounded. The Russian worker, Witte insisted, was in no worse position than his counterpart in the West, and working conditions were not so odious as to require new legislation immediately.<sup>61</sup> The minister of finance then proceeded to shift the blame for labor difficulties on the policies of the ministry of the interior, focusing on the Goremykin circular. Repression and police intervention in the relationships between the factory owners and their employees, he argued, were the main causes of unrest. Instead of solving the problem, they antagonized the workers and encouraged them to engage in revolutionary activities. Witte even hinted that it would be desirable to provide legal means for workers to express their grievances by allowing them to select representatives to act on their behalf.<sup>62</sup> The proposals of Panteleev were shelved, but the circular of August 12, 1897, remained in effect, and special police units were assigned to the industrial sector supervised on the local level by the office of the governor.

<sup>60</sup> Vovchik, *Politika tsarizma v predrevoliutsionnyi period*, p. 66.

The minister of the interior was the official chief of the gendarmes but the actual command of the corps of gendarmes was exercised by the assistant chief of the corps.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68, and Ozerov, p. 153.

<sup>62</sup> Ozerov, p. 153-154.

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The conference clearly illustrated the divergency of opinions in the government. The ministry of finance was anxious to protect Russia's budding industry while the ministry of the interior sought to pacify the working class and preserve civil order. Whatever measures the ministry of the interior proposed, the ministry of finance looked after the interests of the industrialists first. The ministry of the interior was free to act only in applying repressive measures. Although any overt, radical experimentation with labor organization was prohibited, the possibility of covertly pursuing such a policy without the central government's approval remained.

During the decade preceding the 1905 revolution, many prominent officials came to agree with the ministry of the interior on the necessity for improving the workers' lot. In 1901, memoranda from his subordinates, as well as suggestions from the city governors of Odessa and St. Petersburg, the governor general of Warsaw, and Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii (future minister of the interior), prompted the minister of the interior, D. S. Sipiagin, to make a personal inspection tour of factories. As a result of his tour, he recommended that the government strive to create a "stable and conservative element" among the workers by improving factory conditions, initiating profit-sharing schemes, and encouraging workers to acquire their own homes. "It is common knowledge that nothing reinforces social order, providing it with stability, strength, and ability to withstand alien influences, better than . . . small private owners, whose interests would suffer adversely from all disruptions of normal working conditions."<sup>63</sup> The major part of Sipiagin's memorandum was devoted to the elaboration of police measures for the supervision of labor. He argued that the government, while helping workers improve their lot, must be involved in every aspect of their lives, "must firmly grasp all reins of control over these classes of population and make them fully feel its firm but completely impartial and fair tutelage."<sup>64</sup> He suggested special police de-

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139, and Vovchik, p. 83.

<sup>64</sup> Ozerov, p. 138.

tachments and agents be maintained in factories at the expense of the employers as a form of "insurance" against unrest.<sup>65</sup> Sipiagin also repeated the suggestion, so odious to Witte, that the factory inspectorate be transferred to the ministry of the interior.<sup>66</sup>

The growing concern of the ministry of the interior with the revolutionary potential of the labor movement was born out in statistics. The strike movement continued to grow despite the severe repressive measures taken against strikers. According to the figures recorded by the factory inspectorate, there were 68 strikes in 1895, 118 in 1896, 145 in 1897, 215 in 1898, and 189 in 1899—a total of 860 for the five-year period. Although the number of strikes declined during 1900-1901 because of a recession, they reached a new peak in the turbulent year of 1903 when 550 strikes were recorded. The official figures, covering only enterprises subject to the inspectorate, were incomplete. One authoritative Soviet source computes the number of strikes from 1895 to 1900 to be 1,023—nearly 200 more than was given in official statistics.<sup>67</sup>

The local government agencies that had the most frequent and close contact with the workers were, not surprisingly, the police. During the five-year period from 1891 to 1895, troops were used to quell labor disorders in 67 instances; over the next five years, the number increased to 226 calls; and in the five years preceding 1905, troops were called out 651 times.<sup>68</sup> The police could observe first-hand how the policies of the state not only failed to win the loyalties of the workers, but also pushed them closer toward

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>67</sup> Varzar, *Statisticheskie svedeniia o stachkakh rabochikh na fabrikakh i zavodakh za desiatiletie 1895-1904*, p. 10. For Soviet figures, see *Raboochee dvizhenie v Rossii v XIX veke*, vol. IV, part 2, pp. xx. Even higher figures are given in *Istoriia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza* (1964), vol. I, p. 189.

<sup>68</sup> Vovchik, pp. 284 and 297, gives tables showing the use of troops to suppress labor disturbances. On the use of troops, to quell mass disturbances, see also Petrov, "Tsarskaia armiiia v bor'be s massovym revoliutsionnym dvizheniem v nachale XX veka," pp. 324-325.

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their only sympathetic allies—members of the political opposition, particularly the radical intelligentsia. The international socialist and labor movements already had a rich tradition, and Russian labor was bound to be affected by the experiences of workers in other countries. Although on the whole direct contacts between workers and the intelligentsia were not extensive, workers were becoming increasingly receptive to socialist ideas, and the more advanced labor leadership was quite familiar with socialist doctrines.

In Russia, previous attempts to divert workers from socialist influences by giving them a chance to promote their own interests under proper direction had failed. In 1870 a group of Moscow industrialists proposed to establish a society for the protection of workers, but nothing came of the project.<sup>69</sup> In 1895 a procurator of the Odessa court, B. Iu. Witte, the brother of the minister of finance, proposed that workers be allowed to organize and discuss their affairs among themselves, seeking lawful solution to their problems with the aid and support of the authorities. This would help protect them from revolutionaries, he reasoned: "If there are societies against alcoholism or for protection of animals, why not a society dedicated to the prevention of corruption of people by revolutionary propaganda?"<sup>70</sup> Various other schemes were proposed, but none of them managed to satisfy the interests of state security, protect the interests of the employers, and at the same time attract the workers. Clearly, developing and implementing an original and mutually satisfying approach to the labor problem was beyond the resources of the central ministries.

The Russian government's failure to provide suitable outlets for the workers' discontent can be attributed to the lack of a defined labor policy during the time when the country faced the most severe test of a modernizing society. In the beginning of the twentieth century Russian statesmen still clung to the view that there was no working-class problem in the Western sense, when in fact, as the events of 1905

<sup>69</sup> Vovchik, p. 108, and Zelnik, pp. 376-378.

<sup>70</sup> Vovchik, p. 109.

were to show, the problem in Russia was, if anything, more severe.<sup>71</sup> The government responded only when serious disruptions took place with both repression and concessions—measures inadequate to pacify the workers permanently, but sufficient to antagonize them further and convince them that struggle was their only hope. The most important ministries were locked in bitter conflict, and local officials were often left to handle labor disputes on their own.

In March 1902, yet another conference of ministers was called to consider surveillance of workers, factory reforms, and labor organizations. Predictably, the conference found free professional labor organizations to be in conflict with the principles of autocracy<sup>72</sup> but appointed a committee, chaired by the assistant minister of finance, Prince A. D. Obolenskii, to propose an acceptable form of workers' organization. As a result, workers were permitted to establish mutual-aid funds strictly on the local level, depending on the authorization of the local officials and the express approval of factory owners as well. Enacted on June 10, 1903, the law permitted workers to elect a slate of candidates from which the owners, with the approval of the local governor, could select the most agreeable representatives, who were designated "elders." Thus the "elders" functioned strictly at the pleasure of the employers. The employers regarded even this minimal measure with great suspicion, but the workers viewed the election of elders as a farce.<sup>73</sup>

On the eve of the revolution of 1905, the confusion and paralysis that prevailed in labor policy on the highest level of state prohibited any radical departure from traditional approaches. But the solution of the labor problem de-

<sup>71</sup> For comments of Witte and Plehve on the seriousness of the problem see Russia. Gosudarstvennyi sovet. *Otchety Gosudarstvennogo soveta za 1902-1903 gg.* (St. Petersburg, 1903), pp. 193-195.

<sup>72</sup> Vovchik, p. 97. In March of 1903, a provision was added to the Criminal Code (art. 124, chapter 5) making establishment of, and participation in, an unauthorized organization, including a professional one, a crime, subject to a fine of 300 rubles and imprisonment for not more than three months.

<sup>73</sup> Bykov, pp. 198-199, and Martov, "Razvitie promyshlennosti i rabochee dvizhenie s 1893 do 1903 g.," p. 155.

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manded such departures, as the officials who dealt with this problem on a local level knew. They were more apt to consider unconventional or untried solutions. Unable to reach a consensus on a national labor policy, ministries were prone to pursue their own ends, allowing local officials to experiment independently, as long as these experiments did not get out of hand.

In the vacuum left by the lack of a national policy there appeared a bold new plan to promote labor organizations under the sponsorship and close supervision of the secret police. This original idea, subsequently labeled "police socialism," owed much of its success to the support of local authorities. It was originated by an ambitious chief of the secret police in Moscow, Sergei V. Zubatov, who believed that only through the unlikely marriage of the police and the working class could the state keep revolutionary forces from creating their own, dangerous organizations. The plan, which Witte never would have accepted, was tacitly approved by the ministry of the interior and put into effect on a limited scale. But it soon became evident, despite initial successes, that the police supervision of unions in no way guaranteed restraint on the part of workers or the co-operation of the factory owners once labor disputes broke out. Several large-scale strikes led to an official crackdown on Zubatovite organizations, and Zubatov himself fell into disfavor.

Despite the evident failure of the Zubatov organizations, the idea of state sponsorship was not abandoned, and the disbanded police unions became a spawning ground for other experiments in labor organization. The remnants of the Zubatov organization in St. Petersburg became the origins of a new organization with modest goals of mutual aid, education, and Christian brotherhood led by a rather unusual young Orthodox priest, Father Georgii Gapon. Like its leader, the Gaponovite organization presented a strange combination of pious traditionalism and radical, potentially explosive, innovation. Its activities, little more than tea parties at first, by an unforeseeable yet logical progression led

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to the horrendous massacre of Bloody Sunday, January 9, 1905. Bloody Sunday and the year of revolutionary turmoil that followed did not destroy the imperial regime, but they shook it to its foundations and exposed its mortal weaknesses. The revolution of 1905 was not the "final act" but the "dress rehearsal," as Lenin aptly named it, to the drama of the fall of the Romanov dynasty twelve years later.

## Father Georgii Gapon

Who is Father Gapon? He is not a Revolutionary Socialist. He is not a Social Democrat. He is not a Liberal. What is he then—this Father Gapon? Father Gapon is a type known for centuries in Russian history. . . . Yes, the Russian people present a compact whole, all of the same fiber, having for their representative Father Gapon if peasants, Count Tolstoy if nobles.

Catherine Breshkovskaia, "Grandmother of the Russian Revolution"

What a strange man he was!

Count Witte

Georgii Apollonovich Gapon was born on February 5, 1870, in the village of Beliki in Poltava *guberniia*. Situated on the banks of the river Vorskla in the heartland of the Ukraine, the village was surrounded by the historic lands of the Zaporozh'e Cossacks. Georgii's father was a Cossack; his mother came from peasant stock. In his memoirs Gapon stressed his plebeian background,<sup>1</sup> often referring to the financial difficulties of his parents and the necessity of helping them with money. However, sources differ on this point. One of his former teachers described the family as prosperous, and Soviet historians characterize his background as that of a wealthy peasant or *kulak*.<sup>2</sup> To judge from early photographs of Gapon's parents and their home, the family seems to have been adequately provided for but by no means wealthy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni* (Leningrad, 1925), p. 11, and note 1 on p. 131. See also Vodovozov, "Gapon, Georgii Apollonovich," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' T-va Br. A. i I. Granat i Ko.*, XII, p. 530.

<sup>2</sup> "Gapon, Georgii Apollonovich," in *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 2nd ed., x, p. 215; also Tregubov, "Georgii Gapon i vseobshchaia stachka," p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> In Georgii Gapon, *The Story of My Life* (London 1905, and New



The father, Apollon Fedorovich, received his limited formal education from a village sexton. An ambitious man, respected in the small community, Apollon Fedorovich was repeatedly elected a village elder and served as clerk to a *volost* for close to thirty-five years. Both positions were on the lowest rung of village administration. Georgii retained very fond memories of his father, describing him as a "pedant in honesty" who imparted his hatred of social injustice to his son.

Gapon's mother was illiterate, but whatever she lacked in education she made up for in religious fervor. She rigorously insisted on the strict observance of rituals, saying of prayers, and church attendance. Believing that her own salvation depended upon her ability to save the family, his mother did her best to reinforce the teachings of the church in the mind of her eldest son. Gapon's maternal grandfather often read aloud stories from the lives of the saints, and taking them to heart, the boy spent hours before the icons in tears, praying for forgiveness. Prompted by practical as well as spiritual concerns, his mother encouraged Georgii to enter the priesthood, a calling that guaranteed material security as well as spiritual salvation, whence the popular Ukrainian saying, *Pip zolotii snip*—"A priest is a golden sheaf."<sup>4</sup> His mother's strict demands for the observance of ritual and the severe punishments she administered to Georgii when he failed to obey led to an early distaste for formalism in religious practice. His mother's preoccupation with the external forms rather than the spiritual content of religion frustrated her sensitive son.

As a boy Georgii was small in stature and had a very dark complexion. He was physically strong for his size, but his health was frail. Lively, energetic, and extremely impressionable, with a strong tendency to daydream, Georgii loved to hear the popular songs and legends of the glorious surrounding steppe where the fiery Zaporozh'e Cossacks fought their battles. The heroic adventures of the Cossacks

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York 1906) photographs of his parents are reproduced facing pp. 7 and 11.

<sup>4</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 16.

blended in his mind with the holy martyrdom of the saints, and he imagined himself following their footsteps in sweet anticipation of the miraculous. This childhood sense of fantasy and romanticism always remained with him.<sup>5</sup>

In primary school Georgii was an exemplary student, and a priest urged his parents to allow the boy to continue his education. In view of his academic record and his preoccupation with religion, the seminary offered him the best opportunity for education and social advancement.<sup>6</sup> It was decided to enroll Georgii in the Lower Ecclesiastical School in Poltava. He passed the entrance examinations with high marks and was enrolled in the second year of the four-year curriculum. At twelve years of age, Georgii found himself living in the strange surroundings of the boarding school. Dressed in peasant clothes, feeling out of place among the sons of clergy, he immediately became the butt of jokes and pranks. His good grades only helped increase this antagonism, and not until he was able to repay his tormentors in kind was his presence tolerated.<sup>7</sup>

During his last year in the Lower School he came into contact with the teachings of Leo Tolstoy through his instructor, Ivan Mikhailovich Tregubov, one of the well-known disciples of the great writer. Tregubov and his associates carried on discussions with the boy and let him read some of the forbidden works of Tolstoy. Tregubov characterized Gapon between the ages of fifteen and seventeen as

... a serious boy, intelligent and pensive, although a lively one. He was always one of the top students, noted for his diligence and high degree of curiosity. He read much and showed interest in everything.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Based on information from Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, chapter 11.

<sup>6</sup> Simbirskii (pseudonym of Nasakin), *Pravda o Gapone i "g-om ianvare,"* p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Tregubov, "Georgii Gapon," pp. 264-265. Tregubov told Posse, "No, by nature Gapon was a decent person. Among all my students he was the most gifted and, most important, an individual who sought the truth" (Posse, *Vospominania*, p. 101).

Tregubov had a deep influence on Gapon, who began to comprehend the gulf between the formalism of the church and the true nature of religion and did not hesitate to express his own views on the subject. Through Tregubov, Gapon established and maintained contacts with the followers of Tolstoy in Poltava.<sup>9</sup>

When Gapon was sixteen years of age he lost his younger sister. She had been his frequent playmate, and her premature death marked the end of childhood for him.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that there is almost no mention of friends in his childhood. Although he came from a large family (according to one source there were nineteen children, of whom six boys and four girls survived),<sup>11</sup> there is hardly a reference to family members in his autobiography. There is also no mention of friendships with classmates in school or academy, nor are there indications of closeness with his fellow priests. He was close to some of the workers in his organization, but it was the relationship of a superior to subordinates. In other contacts, particularly with the intelligentsia, intimacy was seldom prolonged. Ironically, the only person who came close to being his friend was an engineer, Petr Rutenberg, who met him on January 9, 1905, and was later instrumental in organizing his murder.

Upon completion of the Lower Ecclesiastical School, Gapon was admitted to the Poltava Seminary. His interest in Tolstoy continued to develop under the guidance of local Tolstoyans, particularly Isaak B. Freinerman.<sup>12</sup> Their pacifist teachings, concern for the poor, and criticism of the established church had an effect on him. During his six years at the seminary he became increasingly disillusioned with the practices of the church and spent much time working among the poor and the sick. When school authorities warned him and threatened to take away his stipend, Gapon rejected further aid himself and set out to earn his

<sup>9</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Perris, *Russia in Revolution*, p. 291.

<sup>12</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 17; Tregubov, p. 264.

way by private tutoring. At this point a serious case of typhus, from which he was slow to recover, compounded his difficulties. In his weakened state, it was impossible for him to earn a living, continue his work with the poor, and devote the necessary time to his studies. He decided to give up the priesthood and instead study medicine at the university, but to enter a university he had to graduate in the first category from the seminary. The pressure on Gapon increased as examinations drew near. According to the records of the seminary, he approached one of his teachers, V. Shcheglov, and asked what grade he could expect. When Shcheglov told him he would be graded "as he should be," Gapon threatened to kill both the teacher and himself if he failed to graduate in the first category.<sup>13</sup>

On the day of the examination Gapon sent a letter to the rector of the seminary stating that he could not take the examination due to his "disturbed physical and mental state." The form of address, salutation, and complimentary closing used by Gapon led the academic council to surmise that his mental condition was indeed disturbed. He did not address the letter to "His High Reverence," nor did he conclude it with "Most humble servant of Your High Reverence" as was required. The academic council was also told that Gapon had no particular desire to pursue a religious calling and only "clamored for the first category in order to enter Tomsk University."<sup>14</sup> With this in mind, the council issued Gapon a certificate of completion within the second category with a grade of 4 in behavior instead of a diploma. Anything less than a perfect 5 in behavior was considered unsatisfactory, particularly for a seminarian, and Gapon's opportunities for further study were effectively cut short.

<sup>13</sup> Gapon graduated from the Poltava seminary in 1893. Records pertaining to his graduation are to be found in "Delo Sinoda No. 1898" cited in S.-Peterburgskaia Dukhovnaia Akademiia, *Zhurnaly zasedanii SPB Dukhovnoi Akademii za 1898-1899 uchebnyi god*. Extracts from the records of the Holy Synod and the St. Petersburg Theological Academy dealing with Gapon are summarized in Paozerskii, "Gapon i Sinod," pp. 159-173; and in Avidonov, "Gapon v dukhovnoi akademii," pp. 46-50. The latter summary is the more accurate in details.

<sup>14</sup> Avidonov, p. 47.

He always believed the school authorities deliberately sabotaged his plans in order to punish him for his nonconformist views and his desire to enter a university.

Gapon was twenty-three at the time, and he reacted to his seemingly hopeless situation with fury. Only the timely arrival of his father helped calm his rage. Abandoning thoughts of violent revenge, Gapon found employment as a statistician in the Poltava *zemstvo* and supplemented his income by private tutoring. Gapon traced his early interest in the revolutionary movement to this period when he began reading underground literature.<sup>15</sup>

In Poltava Gapon met his future wife, the daughter of a local merchant, in a house where he gave private lessons. Pretty, well-brought-up, and charming, she was also intelligent and had a secondary education.<sup>16</sup> Like Gapon, she sympathized with the plight of the poor and desired to serve the people. She apparently was familiar with Populist ideas, but her concern was deeply rooted in religious conviction. She argued that it was more important to cater to man's spiritual need than to satisfy his bodily desires. She urged Gapon to reconsider his decision to abandon the priesthood, pointing out that following the teachings of Christ was the highest purpose in life and, despite the flaws of the Orthodox Church, his purpose could best be served in the priesthood.<sup>17</sup>

The young couple were in love, but her parents opposed the match because of Gapon's limited prospects. Eager to overcome their resistance, Gapon once again gave serious

<sup>15</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 18. Gapon uses the term "revolutionary" a number of times in his autobiography, but never explains its meaning. In 1902 *zemstvo* statisticians were instigators of peasant disorders in Poltava *guberniia*, and probably Gapon was exposed to Populist literature while working among them. Evidence points to his lack of familiarity with Marxist ideas at this time.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. A photograph of Gapon's wife is reproduced in *The Story of My Life*, facing p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 19. Gapon was also influenced by his teacher Tregubov, who later recalled that although he knew of Gapon's critical attitude toward the established church, he exhorted his student to become a priest in order to be closer to people and be able to influence them; see Posse, p. 101.

thought to becoming a priest. He appealed to Bishop Ilarion of Poltava, who had been generous to him in the past, for personal aid. The bishop must have been pleased with the return of the prodigal son. Gapon repented for his past ways and promised to do his best in the future. The bishop offered to intercede on Gapon's behalf with the girl's parents. As a result the couple was given permission to marry.

After a year as a psalm reader and only a day's tenure as a deacon, Gapon was ordained a priest and assigned to a lucrative post in the Poltava cemetery church. The cemetery church did not have a regular parish, but soon Gapon was attracting large numbers of the faithful. His services were well attended, and his fast growing reputation for genuine concern for his flock drew parishioners away from other churches. His burgeoning popularity, informal style, and innovations in the service were resented by other clerics. The protection of the bishop and Gapon's unusually rapid promotion made less favored priests jealous. Several lodged complaints, and as a result Gapon was fined. Despite such difficulties with the consistory, Gapon enjoyed his work and the bishop was satisfied with him.

During those years Gapon's married life was happy and relatively calm. The couple had two children, a daughter and a son, but soon after the birth of their son, Gapon's wife fell gravely ill. Her final days were spent in constant prayer, and shortly before her death she had a prophetic dream of her own funeral, describing it exactly as it was to take place. She died in the arms of her husband, and Gapon frequently remarked that with her early passing his life lost its meaning. After her death his wife appeared to him in a vision one night as he was drowsing, and Gapon woke just in time to notice a curtain catching fire. He had always believed in the immortality of the soul and "from that time," he later wrote, "I believed in predestination and the existence of certain ties between the living and the dead."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 21-22; and Gapon, "Pis'ma Gapona," pp. 104-107.

The death of his wife forced Gapon to ponder his future plans once again. Left with two small children and, as Orthodox priests cannot remarry, consigned to be a widower, Gapon resolved to leave Poltava with its painful memories and seek admission to the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. His abilities and recent misfortune induced Bishop Ilarion to address a very strong recommendation to the Holy Synod through its procurator Konstantin Pobedonostsev. Gapon was also able to get a letter of recommendation from a highly placed lady in Poltava addressed to Vladimir Sabler, Pobedonostsev's assistant, who helped steer the young priest through administrative channels.<sup>19</sup>

In his letter Bishop Ilarion excused Gapon's poor seminary record by explaining that his "impertinent antics toward his teacher" were the result of the "physical irritability of Shcheglov on the one hand, and the young man's inability to control himself in despair."<sup>20</sup> The bishop testified to Gapon's miserable situation at the time and was highly complimentary of his protégé, describing him as

a priest truly reverent, earnest in the propagation of the Word of God; edifying and instructive in his discussions, who collects large gatherings in his church despite the fact that his church does not have a parish.<sup>21</sup>

The ecclesiastical authorities agreed with Bishop Ilarion that Gapon's record after ordination as a priest testified to his rehabilitation, and therefore they allowed him to take an entrance examination for the academy without submission of the required seminary certificate. A Synod order of July 30, 1898, confirmed this decision. Gapon placed six-

<sup>19</sup> See Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 22 and 25ff., for an account of his efforts to enter the academy.

<sup>20</sup> Documents relating to his admission to the academy are included in *Zhurnaly zasedanii Soveta SPB Dukhovnoi Akademii za 1898-1899 uchebnyi god*. There is a summary, with discussion, in Avidonov, pp. 47-48, and Paozerskii, pp. 160-161.

<sup>21</sup> Avidonov, p. 48, and Paozerskii, p. 161.

teenth in the group of sixty-seven examinees and was awarded "one of the top scholarships given to the best students."<sup>22</sup>

The St. Petersburg Theological Academy, the most prominent of the four religious academies of the Russian Orthodox Church, offered a four-year program of advanced study. Gapon was admitted in 1898 as one of 235 regularly attending students, including 64 first-year students of whom four held ecclesiastical rank.<sup>23</sup> At the academy Gapon soon became involved in missionary work organized by the Society for Religious and Moral Enlightenment in the Spirit of the Orthodox Church (*Obshchestvo religiozno—nравstvennogo prosveshcheniia v dukhe pravoslavnoi tserkvi*). Over one-third of the student body was involved in this work, conducting religious discussions among the lower classes in industrial shops, lodging houses, factory mess halls, and similar locations.<sup>24</sup>

Gapon threw himself into study and missionary activities with his usual energy, but by the end of the first year he was on the verge of collapse. The strain of work, the pace of life in St. Petersburg, disturbing impressions of the miserable conditions endured by the lower classes in the capital, and further disenchantment with the church led to an acute psychological depression. His attendance at classes became delinquent, and finally Gapon abandoned his work altogether and left for the Crimea where he spent almost a year regaining his health.<sup>25</sup>

On the shores of the Crimea, amid relative peace and quiet, Gapon was able to gather his confused thoughts together. At first he lived in the vicinity of Yalta, but soon his

<sup>22</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> S.-Peterburgskaia Dukhovnaia Akademiia, "Otchet o sostoianii S. Peterburgskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii za 1898 god," pp. 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> For a description of missionary activities, see *ibid.*, pp. 33-35. Gapon's name is listed among those involved in this work. There is a critical summary by a Soviet scholar of missionary activity in Shishkin, pp. 217-227.

<sup>25</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*; chapter v is devoted to this period. See also "Pis'ma Gapon," p. 104.



status as a student of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy gained him the good graces of the bishop of Taurida, Nikolai, who permitted him to live in a monastery near Sevastopol. At one point during his stay there Gapon even considered taking monastic vows, but other ambitions soon distracted him from the cloistered existence. His status as a student and previous friendship with the followers of Tolstoy helped him establish ties with some intellectuals who were also spending that summer in the Crimea. He met several writers and was on good terms with the famous painter, Vasiliï Vereshchagin. He became acquainted and later corresponded with the noted historian of the Great Reforms, G. A. Dzhanishiev.<sup>26</sup> Descriptions of the handsome, fiery-eyed young priest included in letters from his new friends indicate that his health and youthful high spirits had indeed returned:

At that time Father Gapon was approximately thirty years of age. Of average height, well-proportioned and well-coordinated, Father Gapon possessed considerable physical strength. The features of his face, framed by thick, wavy hair and a beard the hue of a raven's wing, were regular and handsome. Especially attractive were his soft, dark eyes with their beautifully formed openings and jet black eyelashes. Father Gapon sang willingly and frequently in his pleasing voice, usually selecting songs by Shevchenko, whose works he also liked to read aloud.

Father Gapon was typically Ukrainian in temperament: sensitive, particularly toward the beauties of nature, mild, gentle, but at the same time quick tempered, decisive, impulsive, and proud. He was very susceptible to praise, but would not allow anyone, irrespective of rank, to offend his dignity or self-esteem.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 34, and "Pis'ma Gapon," pp. 109 and 112.

<sup>27</sup> Prefatory comments to "Pis'ma Gapon," p. 104.

All of his new acquaintances were extremely critical of the established church and advised Gapon to leave the priesthood.<sup>28</sup> One couple generously offered to subsidize his study of medicine in the university. Gapon's letters to these prospective benefactors were permeated by an earnest desire to return to secular life. Dramatically proclaiming his "crossing of the Rubicon," he wrote, "In short, one way or another I am almost irrevocably determined to change the course of my life. I cannot stand this any longer."<sup>29</sup>

In the beginning of November 1899, Gapon returned to St. Petersburg in good health and full of resolve. But the real prospect of leaving his relatively secure vocation as a priest for the uncertain life of a university student must have given him second thoughts. In his autobiography Gapon attributed his change of heart in part to the memory of his late wife who had so strongly encouraged him to enter the priesthood.<sup>30</sup> He further hoped that as a graduate of the academy he would be able to obtain a good position working among the lower classes in St. Petersburg. Resolving to reenter the academy but to give his studies only as much time as was necessary to pass the examinations, Gapon determined to concentrate his efforts on coming into closer contact with the working classes in the capital.

To his friends from the Crimea he wrote that the plight of his old parents, who were in poor health and needed financial assistance, forced him to abandon his earlier plans. He further justified his reversal by the Christian ideal of sacrifice:

*Is it not my duty to sacrifice myself, my own "I," for the sake and peace of those who brought me up? . . . I also fathomed another truth—self-sacrifice. No wonder the symbol of our life is a cross. Only self-sacrifice of serious and enduring efforts for the welfare and*

<sup>28</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> "Pis'ma Gapona," p. 106.

<sup>30</sup> Gapon, *The Story of My Life*, p. 59. This reference to his wife's influence is omitted from the Russian translation.

*spiritual peace of those closest to you as well as neighbors can bring an individual the so-called relative happiness, i.e. self-satisfaction. If an individual became permeated with this idea, he could be reconciled with the idea of predestination, with the yoke prepared for him by Life.*<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps it was this commitment to self-sacrifice that led Krupskaja, the wife of Lenin, to conclude after long conversations with Gapon that it would have been difficult to find anyone more thoroughly imbued with the priestly psychology. In discussing this period with her, Gapon explained that despite his disillusionment with the church, he could not disgrace his parents before the entire village by becoming an unfrocked priest. Krupskaja astutely observed, "In this tale is the whole of Gapon."<sup>32</sup>

His clear vacillation in this matter is indicative of Gapon's lifelong effort to reconcile his genuine desire to serve the people with his role as an Orthodox priest. He never fully adjusted to the traditional role of the Russian Orthodox clergy. Although he was deeply religious, his extreme zeal and distinctive personal style set Gapon apart from the other clerics. Nevertheless he enjoyed great success as a priest, and attending the academy was a significant advance in his professional, as well as social, status. As long as he saw prospects of advancing his position through the priesthood, Gapon was ready to reconcile whatever contradictions and doubts existed in his mind.

The decision to remain at the academy was made easier by the treatment Gapon received on his return. His medical excuse for absence and failure to take the examinations was accepted, and he was allowed to repeat the courses he had not completed. Sabler, who had helped Gapon gain admission to the academy two years earlier, invited him to participate in the missionary work of the Church of the Mother of God. A reduced academic load allowed Gapon to accept

<sup>31</sup> "Pis'ma Gapon," p. 108. Italics in the original.

<sup>32</sup> Krupskaja, "g-e ianvaria i Lenin," p. 2.

this offer, which was especially appealing because the church where Sabler was an elder was located in the port area of St. Petersburg, one of the city's poorest working-class districts. The missionary work, conducted under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of Religious and Moral Enlightenment, headed by Father Ornatskii, consisted of lectures and discussion groups among workers at the large industrial plants and shipyards on the waterfront. Gapon's lectures soon became popular and frequently drew crowds of over two thousand listeners. The main theme of the talks was that "only by serious, honest and patient labor in the spirit of Orthodoxy could one attain relative happiness in this world."<sup>33</sup>

At this time Gapon proposed the formation of a brotherhood whose members were to set an example of Christian living, especially on the religious holidays, and to help each other in case of need. It was to be a large-scale religious mutual-aid society controlled by its members with twelve branches in the port area alone. The scope and ambition of Gapon's enterprise left his superiors somewhat amazed. Although no one objected to the proposal, the project was eventually turned down with the excuse that it would duplicate the already existing mutual-aid society for flood victims. Many of the basic features of this original proposal reappeared in Gapon's later workers' organizations.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Pis'ma Gapona," pp. 111-112. For an example of sermons read at these meetings, see *ibid.*, pp. 109-111.

<sup>34</sup> In a letter dated March 7, 1900, Gapon listed the brief purposes of the brotherhood and the obligations of its members:

[Members are] to practice their Orthodox faith in deeds and set an example for others by *their own lives*, particularly on holidays. For this purpose each member of the brotherhood is *obligated*: (a) to attend, whenever possible, religious services on the days off; (b) to contribute to the success of religious gatherings conducted outside of religious services by attending them; (c) to attend and to send their children to public lectures on general educational subjects (systematic courses of instruction); (d) to assist in the formation of a church-public choir . . . ; (e) [to work for] eventual formation of a temperance society from among the members of the brotherhood; (f) to assist each other materially, and in the case of the death of a member, to provide for his proper burial and to take care of his orphans ("Pis'ma Gapona," p. 112).

Gapon was still hard at work on the projected brotherhood when he accepted a position as senior priest in the Second Orphanage of the Moscow-Narva Branch of the Society of Solitude for Poor and Sick Children, commonly referred to as the Blue Cross Orphanage, and a part-time teaching position at the Orphanage of St. Olga.<sup>35</sup> His new appointments enabled him to have his own church, and his financial situation was so much improved that he was able not only to help support his parents, but also to save enough money for a visit with his family during the summer.

Returning to St. Petersburg that fall, Gapon plunged into his new activities with great enthusiasm. His services in the church attracted large crowds, and his simple sermons, delivered with a distinct Ukrainian accent, visibly moved the masses of working-class worshippers in the audience. Gapon introduced some innovations in the services themselves, allowing common singing of prayers and making the congregation kneel for parts of the service. Even nonbelievers attended the services and were impressed, as the following description by a man with extensive experience in Social Democratic circles, a future lieutenant in Gapon's organization, indicates:

I never before heard such marvelous services. He performed services like an artist. Why, I did not have faith in all this, but when one listens to him for a while, one wants to hear more. He has a good voice, baritone, and he serves with enthusiasm. I remember one instance when Gapon was leading the services and for some reason was reciting a prayer for the dead. I turned around and people were crying.<sup>36</sup>

The effect of Gapon's words was intensified by his charismatic appearance, especially his deep hypnotic eyes which "burned with some inner light"<sup>37</sup> and "seemingly grasped

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113, and Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 37, and note 23 on p. 134.

<sup>36</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon. Vospominaniia," p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> General A. I. Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 152.

the surrounding impressions and carried them off somewhere into the depths. There was something penetrating, searching and sly in those eyes."<sup>38</sup>

In the orphanage the handsome young priest hastened the tempo of life of the wards. He introduced new forms of entertainment popular among the academy students, including frequent singing. He behaved very unconventionally—chopping wood himself, playing stick-ball with the children, and bringing his own tea and sugar when he visited poor parishioners so as not to burden or embarrass his hosts. Gapon's generosity and his insistence on simplicity became a sensation. As one former colleague related:

One morning before he got up the watchman informed him that some tramp was looking for him.

"What does he want?"

"He asks for boots; he has nothing to wear."

"Then give him the boots that I put outside the door."

"No. The only ones there are your new boots."

"Take them and give them away."

"But you paid twelve rubles for them."

"Give them away!"

Doubtless Gapon enjoyed being the unrivaled center of attention, though, as he modestly explained to his amazed colleagues at the orphanage, "I am a priest only in a church; here I am simply an individual like everyone else."<sup>39</sup>

While Gapon's popularity was constantly growing, his studies at the academy suffered. He kept up with his work there only as much as was necessary to remain a student. *With his characteristic overflow of energy, he became involved in a project to raise funds for the construction of a nursery at the orphanage. He himself contributed his salary*

<sup>38</sup> A. S., "Iz zagranichnykh vstrech," p. 175. A. S. is a pseudonym of Semen A. Rappoport, a prominent Socialist Revolutionary.

<sup>39</sup> From the excerpts of the reminiscences of Father Popov in Bukhbinder, "Iz zhizni G. Gapon," pp. 101-102. Father Popov was an adversary of Gapon at the orphanage and disapproving of the antics cited above, he portrays Gapon in a very unfavorable light.

as a part-time teacher to this cause, but his main interest continued to be the poor and the workers who came to listen to him in church and attended his discussion groups.<sup>40</sup> Gapon tramped all over the port area, becoming a familiar figure in factories, workers' quarters, flop houses, camps of beggars, and similar places.

This strange preoccupation with the lower classes on the part of a student-priest did not escape the watchful eyes of the authorities. One day Gapon was summoned by the city governor, General N. V. Kleigels, to explain the nature of his duties and his interest in the workers.<sup>41</sup> Gapon told of his concern for the poor and said he was preparing a report on a project for rehabilitation of the poor. Satisfied that there were no political implications involved, the city governor dismissed Gapon, encouraging him to continue working on the report.<sup>42</sup>

Following his talk with Kleigels, Gapon began earnestly working on his proposal for a system of workhouses and colonies in the countryside to rehabilitate criminals and provide work for the unemployed. The workhouses were to be organized into several divisions, and individuals would select a job in the appropriate category. The lowest level of workhouses would admit criminals kept under guard and paid only part of their earnings. Rehabilitation was to come through labor, and the church was to be the beneficent center of religious and moral influence. Deserving individuals would be advanced to the next level where they would enjoy greater freedom, retain a higher percentage of their earnings, and practice a greater degree of man-

<sup>40</sup> "Pis'ma Gapona," pp. 114-115.

<sup>41</sup> The post of city governor (*gradonachal'nik*) was an office that existed only in five cities. The office of the city governor of St. Petersburg was the most important and elaborate, since it combined the powers of provincial governors over the capital and its surrounding territory. All local agencies were subordinated to it as were also national agencies in matters pertaining to the affairs of the capital. Thus when Zubatov was assigned to St. Petersburg as the chief of the Special Section of the police department, he was under the authority of the city governor in local matters.

<sup>42</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 38.

agement control over their respective establishments. On the highest level workers would operate their establishments autonomously and keep practically all their earnings. Having accumulated approximately 300 rubles, a worker would be permitted to leave the system and rejoin society.<sup>43</sup>

Gapon discussed this plan widely with the poor and unemployed and received their enthusiastic approval, collecting close to seven hundred signatures in support of his proposals. The project was then brought before General Kleigels with an extensive criticism of the existing system of workhouses. A copy was forwarded to the administrator of workhouses, General V. Maksimovich; and eventually the empress, official patroness of workhouses, heard of the project and requested that it be submitted to the council of ministers for consideration in her presence. Gapon was invited to these deliberations. Unable to contain his enthusiasm, Gapon wrote to his friends in the Crimea, "I will tell you a secret. My work was already presented for imperial consideration and has been placed on the agenda of the council of ministers."<sup>44</sup> In his memoirs he confesses, "The success of my report was so encouraging that I wanted to devote the rest of my life to this problem."<sup>45</sup>

The growing popularity of Father Gapon and the prospects of an audience with the empress stimulated considerable interest among certain members of the St. Petersburg aristocracy. According to his own account, Gapon became a frequent guest in many of their homes. He often visited Mme. Sofia Khitrovo, widow of the Hofmarshal and the Russian ambassador to Japan, and Elizaveta Naryshkina, a lady-in-waiting to the empress. Naryshkina imbued him with a sense of intense loyalty to the emperor, whom she greatly admired. She related stories of life in the palace and praised the imperial family highly. "Thanks to her I began to idealize Emperor Nicholas II," commented Gapon. He became convinced that the salvation of Russia could be

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>44</sup> "Pis'ma Gapona," p. 116.

<sup>45</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 40. See also Bukhbinder, "Iz zhizni Gapona," pp. 103-104.



achieved through the emperor. "I thought that when the moment came, he would appear in his true light, hear his people, and make them happy."<sup>46</sup>

The enticing prospects opening before him quickly inflated his vanity, and Gapon paid even less attention to his studies. The academy became completely distasteful to him.<sup>47</sup> Never on good terms with his fellow students, Gapon's manner became even more overbearing and imperious than usual. He was heard to remark, "Wait! Later they will know who Gapon is!" and, "I will either end up famous or imprisoned!"<sup>48</sup> His preoccupation with the report led Gapon to neglect the management of the orphanage as well. In fact, he utilized the facilities of the orphanage for the preparation of his report and assigned girls from the upper classes to help him with clerical work.<sup>49</sup>

When Gapon first came to the orphanage he had been treated with great reverence. His popularity enhanced the prestige of the orphanage and its church. The managing board complied with his every wish. But the projects and reforms Gapon proposed, whether for the nursery, brotherhood, or workhouses, were based explicitly on criticism of existing conditions and those responsible for them. Inevitably Gapon began to have difficulties with the board as well as with his superiors in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Accusations of mismanagement were leveled against him, and, when confronted with the charges, Gapon acted rashly, further antagonizing the board. He threatened to leave the orphanage and publicly attacked the members of the board before the congregation of the church, inviting the assembled to join him in a new place of worship. He then asked the congregation to offer thanks to God for his deliverance from his position.

As a result of Gapon's appeals to the public and the bene-

<sup>46</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 40-41. It is interesting to note that Naryshkina does not mention Gapon in her memoirs.

<sup>47</sup> "Pis'ma Gapona," p. 116.

<sup>48</sup> Iuvachev, "Mogila Gapona," p. 210; and Father Popov in Bukhbinder, "Iz zhizni Gapona," p. 104.

<sup>49</sup> Father Popov in Bukhbinder, "Iz zhizni Gapona," p. 104.

factors of the orphanage, several students were withdrawn and his opponents in the administration threatened with bodily harm. As one of the board members exclaimed, "The administration of the orphanage could not show its face; it was abused and stoned. It became necessary to consider not only Gapon, but an agitated and hostile mass."<sup>50</sup>

In the midst of this turmoil Gapon did irreparable harm to his cause by leaving for Poltava, taking with him a recent graduate of the orphanage, Aleksandra K. Uzdaleva ("Sasha"), who had been prevented from leaving that institution by the administration. The administrative head of the orphanage, Mme. Bogdanova, issued Uzdaleva travel documents in violation of the express instructions of the board, indicating perhaps malicious intent in the unusual attempt of the management to detain a recent graduate. It is highly unlikely that a woman in Bogdanova's position of responsibility would have jeopardized her reputation by allowing one of her wards to run off with a priest. However, the circumstances of Gapon's sudden departure greatly strengthened his opponents' hand. Hinting at a scandal, the board accepted Bogdanova's resignation and dismissed Gapon on July 17, 1902.<sup>51</sup>

The incident with Uzdaleva attained considerable prominence in later years and helped foster ugly rumors that Gapon was a reckless degenerate. In January 1905, Mme. Khitrovo recounted Gapon's alleged escapades and drunken sprees to the writer M. S. Mintslov, explaining that the priest's conduct was condoned because he was an illegitimate son of the metropolitan of St. Petersburg, Antonii.<sup>52</sup> The American ambassador to Russia, Robert McCormick, informed the State Department that Gapon had on his record the "violation of a twelve-year old girl."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, and the official report of the managing board of the orphanage cited in Simbirskii, pp. 57-59. Although Popov dwells extensively on the dismissal of Gapon from the orphanage for his mismanagement, he does not even mention Uzdaleva.

<sup>52</sup> Mintslov, "Dnevnik, 1905-1906 gg.," p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Diplomatic Dispatches from Russia*, National Archives Collection M35, Microfilm roll 62, p. 8.

Whatever prompted Gapon to take Uzdaleva with him, she was to remain at his side for the rest of his life and eventually became his common law wife and mother of his child. But she never enjoyed the revered position his first wife had held in his life, and always remained in the background. Their relationship, with its scandalous overtones, became a topic of heated debate and a source of vicious personal attacks on Gapon.<sup>54</sup> Uzdaleva is not mentioned in Gapon's autobiography, but after his death she openly referred to him as her husband.

Gapon's impulsive and indiscreet behavior suggests that, once again, his nerves were strained to the breaking point. Having regained his health at home, Gapon must have realized the serious consequences of his actions. There was, first of all, the matter of examinations at the academy in the fall which he was unprepared to take. He decided to petition for permission to repeat the third year, attaching a medical statement testifying to his poor health. Although two years before such an excuse had been sufficient, now the academy rejected his appeal "due to the absence of valid reasons."<sup>55</sup>

Gapon then approached Metropolitan Antonii himself (who was absent from St. Petersburg at the time of the incident) and submitted a letter of explanation to him:

Due to unfortunate circumstances I fell ill and was not able to take all of the examinations necessary for advancement to the fourth course in the spring, nor take the remaining examinations in the fall.

<sup>54</sup> Feliks (pseudonym of Litvinov), *Gapon i ego obshchestvenno-politicheskaia rol'*, contains the most extensive contemporary condemnation of Gapon on moral grounds. Gapon was defended by Simbirskii in *Pravda o Gaponе*. Gapon's own defense was elaborated in a letter sent to several Russian newspapers on March 12, 1906. The text of the letter and other pertinent material is assembled in *Ogni*, no. 1 (March 19, 1906), p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> The records of the academy are summarized in Avidonov, pp. 49-50, and Paozerskii, pp. 162-163. The minutes of the academic council of the academy in *Zhurnaly zasedanii Soveta SPB Dukhovnoi Akademii*, appear as supplements to the journal *Khrist'ianskoe chtenie*. The record for the academic year 1902-1903 is in the supplement to *Khrist'ianskoe chtenie* for 1903; on Gapon, see pp. 25-26, 33-34, 66, and 84-85 of the supplement. See also "Pis'ma Gaponа," p. 116.

My request for permission to repeat the third course, despite the fact that medical certificates of my poor health were delivered to the academy office within the required time, was turned down by the council of the Academy.<sup>56</sup>

Gapon then requested that he be permitted to repeat the third year, since taking examinations at that time and further work in the fourth course would not provide sufficient time for him to prepare material for his candidate's thesis.

On October 16, after an audience, the metropolitan partially acceded to his request. Gapon was to take all of the examinations by November 15, but would not be allowed to repeat the third course. The meeting of the academy council of November 25 recorded that Gapon passed examinations in six subjects with the average grade of 4.088 (out of 5) and was transferred to the fourth course. On November 27 the metropolitan approved this decision.<sup>57</sup>

The reinstatement of Gapon was not a result of academic deliberations alone; it followed a protracted investigation by police authorities. A high police official of the Special Department, former Okhrana agent N. N. Mikhailov, visited Gapon. They had a long discussion, and Mikhailov submitted a favorable report which persuaded the metropolitan to give Gapon an audience and allow him to return to the academy.<sup>58</sup> The manner in which the investigation was handled supports Gapon's contention that his principal difficulties stemmed from political denunciations. Since Gapon was already known to the city governor personally, corroboration of his political reliability by Mikhailov was sufficient to clear him. It is highly unlikely that the metropolitan would have overlooked serious transgressions of a

<sup>56</sup> Paozerskii, p. 163, and Avidonov, p. 49.

<sup>57</sup> Paozerskii, p. 163, and Avidonov, p. 50.

<sup>58</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 43, and note 34 on p. 135. The Russian translation stated that Gapon was "reinstated in his priestly status," while the original in English simply reported that Gapon was reinstated in his "situation." Gapon did not lose his priestly status at that time, nor was he subjected to any disciplinary action.

moral and criminal nature on the part of an advanced student in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy in order to please police authorities; thus his personal intervention is a further indication that the main accusations against Gapon were of a political nature, and lesser charges must have dissipated when the principal one collapsed.

Although Gapon's reputation suffered and he never fully regained the confidence of his superiors, he retained some useful connections and continued to participate in the Religious-Philosophical Society, where the metropolitan played an important role.<sup>59</sup> The long political investigation involving numerous local government and police officials brought Gapon's successful missionary endeavors among the workers to the attention of the authorities. They encouraged his efforts, and, when the head of the Special Section of the police department, Sergei V. Zubatov, attempted to establish a police-supervised workers' organization in St. Petersburg, the local authorities turned to Gapon for assistance. His tainted reputation limited Gapon's possibilities for further advancement in the church, and so began a new phase in his career, during which the controversial priest was to become a central figure in the St. Petersburg labor movement.

<sup>59</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 53, and note 54 on p. 141. See also remarks of Dillon, *The Eclipse of Russia*, p. 158.

## *Zubatov in St. Petersburg*

The history of the revolutionary movement has shown that the intelligentsia alone is not strong enough to win in its struggle with the government, even if it arms itself with explosives.

Zubatov (1898)

. . . the system of secret agents (*agentura*), "spying" in the terminology of some people, is the holy of holies for me. . . . The ties with the *agentura* are my fondest and dearest memories. It was a painful and difficult business, but how delicate it was at the same time.

Zubatov to Burtsev (1908)

In April 1902, minister of the interior D. S. Sipiagin was assassinated by revolutionaries, and V. K. Plehve, an experienced administrator in the ministry of the interior, succeeded him in office. The new minister faced turbulent times—the very foundations of the state were shaken by rising social discontent and the growing revolutionary movement. Determined to restore order, Plehve proclaimed his firm intention to institute far-reaching reforms and simultaneously crush the revolutionary movement. Plehve had considerable experience with the problems of labor. In discussions with the former chief factory inspector I. I. Ianzhul, he spoke of the labor problem as a matter of highest priority, his most pressing concern.<sup>1</sup>

The need for internal security, however, and the continuing opposition from various segments of society prompted the new minister to embark on a policy of repression, holding off substantive reforms by temporary measures and

<sup>1</sup> Ianzhul, *Vospominaniia I. I. Ianzhula*, vol. II, pp. 47-49, 53-54, and 68-69. Morskoi (pseudonym of V. I. fon Shtein) is very skeptical of this account in *Zubatovshchina: Stranichka iz istorii rabochego voprosa v Rossii*, pp. 147-152.

makeshift policies. His term in office is generally viewed as a period of unmitigated reaction and repression culminating in his assassination by a terrorist bomb. His labor policy, begun on a promising note, soon lost its force and was allowed to proceed willy-nilly, dictated by expediency, vacillations and disagreements within the ministry, and a general lack of concern. This lack of consistent central direction allowed local government agencies to intervene actively in labor questions with considerable autonomy. The most infamous attempt to manipulate labor organizations through government agencies was that of Sergei Zubatov.<sup>2</sup>

Zubatov began his unusual career by joining a revolutionary circle, but he soon became disillusioned with revolutionary activity and turned police informer. In logical sequence, he then joined the police department and eventually became an officer in the Moscow section of the secret police. An ardent monarchist, Zubatov thereafter devoted his life to the struggle against revolutionaries. His ardor was so great that, when informed of the overthrow of the monarchy in February 1917, he got up from the family table, walked into another room and shot himself.

A man of considerable intelligence and erudition, Zubatov had a profound grasp of the dynamics of the revolutionary movement in Russia. The rise of the strike move-

<sup>2</sup> The most detailed study of Zubatov and his labor policies is the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Jeremiah Schneiderman, *The Tsarist Government and the Labor Movement 1898-1903: Zubatovshchina* (University of California, Berkeley, 1967). See also appropriate sections in Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, and the article by Korelin, "Russkii 'politseiskii sotsializm' (zubatovshchina)," pp. 41-58. Dmitrii Pospelovsky's *Russian Police Trade Unionism: Experiment or Provocation?* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) appeared after the completion of this chapter, but it did not contain any new material and could have benefited had the works cited above been consulted. The most recent treatments of Zubatov in monographic studies by Soviet historians are Vovchik, *Politika tsarizma po rabochemu voprosu v predrevoliutsionnyi period* (Lvov, 1964); and Laverychev, *Tsarizm i rabochii vopros v Rossii (1861-1917)* (Moscow, 1972). There is an excellent study by a Polish scholar, Ludwik Bazulow: *Polituka wewnetrzna caratu i ruchy społeczne w Rosji na początku XX wieku* (Warsaw, 1966).

ment, the emergence of the proletariat as a political force, and the growth of revolutionary activity among the workers in the late 1890s threatened to provide the revolutionary intelligentsia with a mass following. Recognizing this danger, Zubatov turned his attention to organizing the workers in ways which would not harm the existing government.

In 1898 Zubatov prepared an extensive memorandum on the problem of labor for the acting prefect of Moscow, D. F. Trepov. This memorandum, which embodied the totality of Zubatov's political understanding of, and personal experience with, the revolutionary movement,<sup>3</sup> set down the ideological foundations of the future labor experiment often referred to as "police socialism" or "*zubatovshchina*."<sup>4</sup> In its introductory sections, the Zubatov memorandum explained why labor was a potential threat to the security of the state. "The history of the revolutionary movement has shown that the intelligentsia alone is not strong enough to win in its struggle with the government even if it [the intelligentsia] arms itself with explosives." To win, Zubatov argued, the intelligentsia had to gain the support of the masses. It was incumbent on the regime to prevent such a junction of forces:

While a revolutionary advocates pure socialism, he can be dealt with by means of repressive measures alone, but when he begins to exploit for his purpose minor shortcomings of the existing lawful structure, the repressive measures alone cease to be sufficient. It becomes necessary to take the very ground from underneath his feet.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Zubatov to V. L. Burtsev of December 18, 1906, in Koz'min, ed., *Zubatov i ego korrespondenty*, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> As was frequently the case in Russia, this secret memorandum did not remain secret very long and was soon published in an underground revolutionary paper: "Tainyi doklad i.d. Ober-Politsiimeistera (po Okhrannomu otdeleniiu) 8 apreliia 1898 g.," *Raboochee delo*, no. 1 (April 1899), pp. 24-34, with editorial comments on pp. 34-40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.



To undercut the revolutionary drive, Zubatov maintained, the authorities had to convince the workers that their lives could be improved within the existing system. At the same time every means had to be employed for the forceful extraction of the revolutionary agitators "from the environment best suited to their schemes."<sup>6</sup> The memorandum then proposed that the authorities provide Russian workers with an alternative to revolutionary appeals by allowing them to organize under the direct supervision of the police.

Two contradictory tendencies incorporated in the Zubatov memorandum led to divergent interpretations of the proposed workers' organizations. Because direct police involvement was a necessary condition of the plan, most officials regarded the proposal as a continuation of previous policies primarily designed to restrict the workers and limit the sphere of revolutionary activity. They were therefore inclined to accept Zubatov's proposal, believing that tighter police control would reduce labor unrest and remove the working class as a factor in the revolutionary movement. For those directly involved in labor problems, the workers and their worried employers, the proposed organizations represented a radical shift in official policies. Instead of repressing the workers, the state would promote the formation of large working-class organizations which would aggressively seek to implement social and economic reforms. While many workers welcomed state intervention on their behalf, some joined the employers in regarding with suspicion the official attempts to channel workers' grievances.<sup>7</sup>

After the memorandum had been duly circulated, Zubatov was allowed to organize workers in several cities on a trial basis. The workers' response to the new organizations

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> A close colleague of Zubatov later characterized Zubatovshchina as an early experiment in Fascism; see General A. I. Spiridovich, "Zubatovshchina. Popytka sozdaniia russkogo fashizma na poroge XX stolietia." I am indebted to the late B. I. Nikolaevsky for calling my attention to this article.

## ZUBATOV IN ST. PETERSBURG

in Moscow and the south was very impressive. Zubatov converted many individuals with former revolutionary sympathies to his ideas by arguing that the aims of Social Democracy could be achieved within the existing system. In Moscow the organization was under his direct control; in the south and west, leadership generally came from Jewish labor organizers and intellectuals who had been converted to Zubatov's views.

The establishment of Zubatov's worker organizations was actually a circumvention of existing laws prohibiting trade unions in Russia. The Zubatov unions operated with the exclusive permission of the police authorities under the legal guise of mutual-aid societies. Since local authorities could prevent their establishment and official support could have been withdrawn at any time, Zubatov had to constantly assure his superiors of his ability to maintain control over the organizations. He also had to convince the workers that the autocracy would guarantee their rights and serve as an impartial mediator over social relations. While urging union members to strive for an evolutionary solution of their grievances and convincing them of the need to remove the revolutionaries from their midst, he had to restrain their natural desire to act spontaneously and directly on their own behalf. Zubatov instructed his followers to keep strictly within the limits permitted by law. "Everything must be directed toward the authorities and through the authorities,"<sup>8</sup> he cautioned.

The popularity of the Zubatov organizations lay in their promise to improve the lives of factory workers without the usual industrial strife. The prospect of legalized union activities could not but attract large numbers of workers who had been ruthlessly persecuted for previous attempts to organize. The revolutionary parties, seeing in the police organizations a clever plot to siphon off the militant revolu-

<sup>8</sup> From the report of Zubatov, dated October 4, 1903, to the director of the police department in Zubatov, "K istorii zubatovshchiny," p. 95. Although this report refers specifically to Jewish organizations in the south, it applies to his other labor organizations as well.

tionary energy of the proletariat, vehemently attacked the promises of gain without conflict. Lenin called them "conscious flirtation, bribery, and perversion. . . . A promise of more or less extensive reforms, but in reality only willingness to fulfill a miniscule fraction of the promise while demanding in return abandonment of the political struggle—this is the essence of Zubatovshchina."<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, a number of workers with Social Democratic and revolutionary backgrounds joined the police payroll as organizers. Their presence at the head of the organization was designed to insure that the efforts of the police would not be diverted into opposition channels by revolutionary party agitators. Zubatov's philosophy was infused with an élitist distrust of the masses, and he put no faith in their ability to lead themselves or maintain allegiance to one program in the face of conflicting ideas. "Workers are not capable of being independent; they immediately fall under alien influence,"<sup>10</sup> he observed.

Zubatov realized that the success of his organizations depended on their ability to fulfill at least partially the workers' expectations. At first he had been primarily interested in the political aspects of the movement, but as he became more involved, he began to strive sincerely for the benefits his organizers promised. Working directly with labor problems convinced him of the need for change, and he hoped that, in return for peace in the factories, the employers would satisfy some of the workers' demands. While to his superiors he emphasized the pacific aspects of the police organizations, he was not adverse to allowing some economic strife and believed that, even in cases of strikes, au-

<sup>9</sup> Lenin, in *Iskra*, no. 26 (October 1902), vol. 7, p. 37. For a brief summary of attitudes of Social Democrats towards Zubatovshchina, see Schwarz, appendix iv: "Social-Democracy and the Zubatov Movement," pp. 385-400.

<sup>10</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 167. This article was written by Zubatov in reply to the book by Morskoï published in 1913, but it was impounded by the police and was not published until after the February revolution. Zubatov seems to have become preoccupied with the problem of will and domination, devoting time to "neo-Nietzschein tracts"; see Tidmarsh, "The Zubatov Idea," p. 340.

thorities should "look the other way" if politics were not involved. His superiors were less inclined to tolerate any unrest among the workers and frequently expressed fears that the organization might get out of hand.<sup>11</sup> Their anxiety was somewhat allayed when Zubatov and his lieutenants organized an unprecedented demonstration of about sixty thousand workers on February 19, 1902, the anniversary of the emancipation of the serfs. Held before the monument to the tsar-liberator, Alexander II, in Moscow, the demonstration took the form of an orderly religious service with humble expressions of loyalist sentiments.

If the officials were somewhat appeased by this show of strength and support, they continued to look askance at the Marxian views evident in much of the propaganda generated by the Zubatov organizers. Emphasizing the inherent conflict between the class interests of the workers and those of the factory owners, the organizers propounded a variety of revisionist economism supported by government intervention on behalf of the workers. Fearing the increasingly inflammatory propaganda of the expanding organization (which was rumored to support an eight-hour workday and eventual worker control in the factories), and hoping to nip the flower of Russian legalized socialism in the bud, a Russian factory owner of French origin, Jules Goujon, used a minor dispute in his factory as an occasion to take an intransigent position. Goujon refused to negotiate with the representatives of Zubatov's organization on the grounds that trade unions were prohibited in Russia by law. Hoping to make an example of him and thus intimidate other employers into a more cooperative mood, Zubatov attempted to have the French national expelled from Russia, but the ministry of finance and the French ambassador came to Goujon's assistance. After this incident, the activities of the workers' organizations in Moscow were drastically cur-

<sup>11</sup> Even General Trepov was reluctant to permit these organizations, and agreed only after some hesitation, commenting that in case the experiment got out of hand, "we will have enough bayonets" (from a letter of Zubatov to Burtsev in Koz'min, p. 87).

tailed. Lectures by professors were replaced by patriotic discussions by well-known reactionary publicists like Lev Tikhomirov; clergymen were brought in to lend the organization a conservative and religious tone;<sup>12</sup> finally, the workers were told to stop submitting complaints to the authorities.<sup>13</sup>

The decline of the Moscow organization indirectly resulted from the equivocal policy of the minister of the interior, Sipiagin, and local officials, who would not openly sanction Zubatov's unions but did not hamper their activities. Shortly after Plehve replaced Sipiagin in the spring of 1902, he promoted Zubatov from head of the Moscow section of the Okhrana to head of the Special Section of the police department. The Special Section, which was chiefly concerned with political investigation and included the secret police or Okhrana division, had its headquarters in St. Petersburg. Zubatov assumed that his promotion indicated the new minister's wholehearted approval of his activities directed at organizing labor. Although Zubatov treated his new appointment as a mandate to continue developing the labor organizations, in reality Plehve regarded the police unions as a temporary expedient useful only until he had time to formulate a permanent policy. Privately, he confessed to regarding the Zubatov organizations "in one sense as a preliminary test and in another as a step toward putting the entire labor problem upon an altogether different footing."<sup>14</sup> In any case, the organizations were a useful means of countering revolutionary influence among the workers, and Plehve deemed their complete suppression at that time impossible.

As soon as Zubatov arrived in St. Petersburg, he contacted his organization in Moscow requesting that two or three men be sent to help establish a similar organization

<sup>12</sup> Zubatov's letter to the editor of *Vestnik Evropy*, p. 435; also Ainzhaft, *Zubatovshchina i gaponovshchina*, p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> Ainzhaft, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past*, p. 119. See also Ianzhul, *Vospominaniia*, vol. II, p. 54, and Pogozhev, "Iz vospominanii o V. K. fon-Pleve," pp. 259ff.

in the capital. The Moscow organization at first sent only one worker, I. S. Sokolov, who was soon joined by two more. Zubatov had met Sokolov earlier and, during interrogations, converted the arrested worker to his views. They found a suitable recruit in St. Petersburg, V. I. Pikunov, a former Social Democrat and follower of Mikhail Ushakov. Ushakov, a smith from the state printing house, had already begun to build the nucleus of a labor organization in St. Petersburg.<sup>15</sup> After some hesitation, Pikunov agreed to initiate organizational efforts in St. Petersburg and was given letters of introduction and funds.

Pikunov discussed a tentative plan of action with Zubatov, who warned him, "not a word to anyone that I am helping you. No one should know, neither the police nor the parties; in short, positively no one, or else the whole undertaking will fail."<sup>16</sup> Zubatov then outlined plans for an organizational meeting and promised to make the necessary arrangement so that no one would be arrested. He advised Pikunov to impress his listeners with the necessity of gaining the cooperation and support of certain important people in the capital. Among those Zubatov mentioned were the city governor, General Kleigels, some prominent men from the literary world, and finally Metropolitan Antonii. "It is imperative for you to gain the support of the clergy, which plays such an important role in Russia," advised Zubatov.<sup>17</sup>

Zubatov's organizing activities in St. Petersburg in the fall of 1902 coincided with Gapon's reinstatement to the Theological Academy. Mikhailov, the agent who investigated the

<sup>15</sup> Pikunov was a close associate of Ushakov, who began organizing his own group prior to the arrival of Zubatov. Ushakov had some ties with the ministry of finance through some factory inspectors. On this, see Sviatlovskii, *Professional'noe divizhenie v Rossii*, p. 69, note 1. Apparently this was not Zubatov's first attempt to found a labor organization in St. Petersburg. He tried to organize workers there in 1901 but nothing came of his efforts; see Vovchik, p. 131. See also note 47 below.

<sup>16</sup> *Tovarishch Iskra*, "Zapiski rabochego," *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 44, p. 2. See also Schneiderman, pp. 298ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Tovarishch Iskra*, no. 44, p. 2.

political charges against Gapon and recommended that he be readmitted, brought the young priest to the attention of the Okhrana chief. The office of the city governor recommended Gapon as "highly reliable." One of Zubatov's assistants in the Okhrana, gendarmes officer A. Spiridovich, also considered Gapon an excellent prospect for a leading role in the organization. He gave the following characterization of the priest:

Nervous, effusive, ambitious, with the burning eyes of an ascetic, Gapon was a restless and turbulent figure. He had unbounded love for the tsar and felt that it was possible to attain through him all that was needed by the people. Romantic at heart, he was much concerned with the unfortunate and poor, and always ran around with various projects concerned with helping them.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, to Zubatov, desperately looking for individuals to lead his organization, the appearance of a young, trusted priest, experienced and popular with the masses, must have been a godsend; he could not have wished for a more suitable prospect. He took the time and effort to draw Gapon into prolonged discussions from which he quickly surmised that the priest was enthusiastic but totally naive in matters pertaining to the labor and revolutionary movements.<sup>19</sup> This was not necessarily a disadvantage, since it would allow Zubatov to indoctrinate Gapon. On request Zubatov willingly supplied Gapon with revolutionary literature; he brought Gapon into the circle of his closest associates, placing him under the direct care of Sokolov.

Despite all this Gapon was reluctant to become too deeply involved in the movement, no doubt aware of the internal

<sup>18</sup> Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 169. That Gapon knew little about the Social Democratic and labor movements could be surmised from his own statement that he read about the possibility of workers leading the revolutionary movement in a work by the Populist writer S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii, and even this happened at a very late date. See Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 50.

difficulties that riddled the organization. Behind in his studies and struggling to complete the required examinations by mid-November, Gapon pleaded lack of time for active participation. Besides, he needed training in methods of organizing labor and wanted time to study the working-class movement before committing himself to Zubatov's project.

The first organization meetings in St. Petersburg were held in early November 1902. Leaflets were hectographed and many of the more active workers received letters from Moscow inviting them to attend the meetings.<sup>20</sup> The workers selected a delegation to visit the deputy city governor, V. E. Frish, who allowed them to hold meetings provided they notified the proper authorities in advance. The delegation then visited the new director of police in St. Petersburg, A. A. Lopukhin, who looked favorably on their intention to form a mutual-aid society and promised his cooperation.<sup>21</sup> The following week Plehve himself received the workers' deputies and, expressing sympathy with their goals, promised to help them. He predicted that labor organizations with experienced leaders would reap great benefits for the workers. "But the basic issue is the question of organizing and uniting the workers," Plehve remarked. "Take a twig, for example. A single twig can be broken with ease, but a whole bundle of twigs cannot be broken at once. The workers should take this as a model and remember that only organization and unity will help them."<sup>22</sup>

Encouraged by their seeming successes, the deputation sought an audience with Metropolitan Antonii. Father Ornatskii, chairman of the Society for Religious and Moral Enlightenment, arranged an audience on December 6, 1902. The metropolitan welcomed the workers' representatives and pointed out that the society conducted religious discus-

<sup>20</sup> See the police report on the interrogation of one of Gapon's close assistants, S. V. Kladovnikov, in Bukhbinder, ed., "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 322.

<sup>21</sup> Lopukhin's own account in *ibid.*, p. 291; see also Tovarishch Iskra, *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 45, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Tovarishch Iskra, *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 46, p. 1.



sions in working quarters under Father Ornatskii's direction and that special arrangements could be made for workers' meetings. He offered to assist in arranging space for the meetings in church halls, but he also indicated that it would be inappropriate for clergy to participate in an organization where matters other than religion and morality would be discussed. At the end of the audience the metropolitan blessed each worker with a copy of the New Testament, saying that the holy book would give them all the necessary guidance in their undertaking.<sup>23</sup>

Despite seemingly warm receptions in official and ecclesiastical circles, and favorable coverage in the conservative press, the delegation received no more than token support. It was crucial for Zubatov to gain a firm commitment from local authorities and the higher officials in order to avoid another Moscow fiasco, but the city governor remained ambivalent, and Plehve's support was conditional at best. Plehve saw the police-dominated unions primarily as a means of extending his influence into the factories—traditionally the exclusive domain of his arch rival, minister of finance Sergei Witte. Witte resisted all such efforts to extend police authority.

Although it could be argued that both ministries were pursuing a similar aim of establishing paternalistic control over the workers, they differed in the basic approaches to policy implementation.<sup>24</sup> With two strong-willed and determined individuals like Plehve and Witte at their heads, the rivalry between these two ministries became more intense. Plehve was willing to pay a certain price for quieting revolutionary tendencies among the workers by pressuring economic concessions from the business community. Witte, on the other hand, strove to protect the entrepreneurs from police intervention in the management of their business af-

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2. For the version given by Metropolitan Antonii, see Shilov, ed., "Peterburgskoe dukhoventstvo," p. 195.

<sup>24</sup> Laverychev, p. 124. The story of the rivalry between the two ministries has been told too many times to need repeating here in detail. For the most recent summaries, see Laverychev and Vovchik.

fairs, and he was willing to sacrifice some measure of state control over the workers either by suggesting the legalization of trade unions (which he knew would not be acceptable to the ministry of the interior officials), or by promoting labor organizations under the sponsorship of ministry of finance officials in direct competition with the ministry of the interior.<sup>25</sup>

The incipient conflict between the two powerful ministers had its repercussions in government circles, and even the church did not escape its effect, as evidenced by the reception of the workers' delegation by Metropolitan Antonii. Prior to the arrival of the delegation, Witte personally contacted Father Ornatskii to inform him that the delegation included several individuals who were on the payroll of the secret police, and that the workers were "pursuing aims that go far beyond moral enlightenment."<sup>26</sup> The metropolitan was reluctant to commit himself to an undertaking with such political coloration, but he was also anxious to avoid being caught in the feud between Witte and Plehve. Therefore, he expressed his cautious encouragement to the delegation, but directed its request for assistance to Father Ornatskii, whose organization he believed was best suited to help them. Ornatskii was all too anxious to take the workers under his organization's wing, but soon withdrew his support "due to the insistent intentions of the leaders to inject social and economic questions into their discussions (besides those of educational value)."<sup>27</sup> In effect, the metropolitan preferred not to become involved in matters that were not exclusively religious, and therefore he equivocated in order not to antagonize either ministry.

The organizational activities of the Zubatovites also met with considerable resistance from some of the workers. The Social Democrats tended to ascribe this resistance to the

<sup>25</sup> See the letter of Zubatov to Shaevich of April 28, 1903, cited in Vovchik, p. 145.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Professor Father Gorchakov in Preobrazhenskii, ed., *Tserkovnaia reforma*, p. 284. See also Tovarishch Iskra, *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 2, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Shilov, "Peterburgskoe dukhoventstvo," p. 196.

more advanced consciousness of the proletariat in the capital. Zubatov's old method of convincing arrested workers to join him had failed to produce sufficiently capable recruits in St. Petersburg, and representatives from Moscow had to be called in. The recent failures of the organization in Moscow, which had been given wide publicity in the legal and underground press, probably accounted in part for the cooler reception in St. Petersburg. The opposition was better prepared, and the Zubatov organizers had to tone down their promises to avoid a repetition of the Moscow experience. It was also widely rumored that the organization had close ties with the police, despite Zubatov's efforts to hide them, and that workers who were unduly outspoken at the meetings were liable to be arrested. Many workers were unwilling to join, convinced that the police were using the organizations as "mouse traps" to ferret out undesirables.<sup>28</sup>

Gapon's reluctance to become deeply or publicly involved in the organizational stages was doubtless influenced by the criticism of Zubatov's undertaking heard on all sides—from revolutionaries, workers, government officials, and the church. Though Gapon continued to work quietly with Zubatov and his aides, he made his presence at workers' meetings as unobtrusive as possible. When Zubatov proposed that he openly join the organization, Gapon demurred, asking for more time to study the matter. He said he wanted to observe the functioning of the Moscow organization during the Christmas recess. Gapon was very dis-

<sup>28</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 166, maintained that he never combined "undercover police work with legalization," i.e. never used his labor organizations to apprehend revolutionary agitators. This is contradicted by the testimonies of both the officials and the workers. For example, during an interrogation by Okhrana officials, S. V. Kladovnikov stated he had received personal instructions from Zubatov to report to the police all suspicious persons who attended workers' meetings. See the interrogation report in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 323-324. This is substantiated by statements of the Okhrana officials who admit that labor meetings were used to ferret out revolutionary agitators. See the statement of an Okhrana officer in Bukhbinder, *op. cit.*, p. 295; and Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 151.

appointed with what he saw in Moscow and on his return to the capital in January argued with Zubatov against workers' organizations under the open tutelage of the police and in favor of free trade unions on the English model. Although Gapon did not break with Zubatov completely, he expressed his criticisms of *zubatovshchina* in a memorandum which he delivered to the city governor, General Kleigels, and Metropolitan Antonii.<sup>29</sup>

Shortly after Gapon's return from Moscow, General Kleigels (possibly in response to Gapon's memorandum) contacted the chief factory inspector of the St. Petersburg *guberniia*, S. Chizhov, to inquire about the activities of workers in St. Petersburg. Both officials were disturbed over the situation; although they were responsible for overseeing the factories, what little they knew about the new workers' organization was gleaned from newspapers and unofficial reports. According to Chizhov, they agreed it was desirable for the government to help workers improve their situation by allowing them to organize, but not in a secretive manner or under the exclusive control of the department of police. Since conflicts with factory owners, including foreign nationals like Goujon, "who are hardly sympathetic to the needs of Russian workers," were inevitable, the unions required a well-defined legal framework in which to operate. In addition, the chief factory inspector hastened to add, the privilege of organizing should be extended fairly to the owners of factories as well.<sup>30</sup>

A week after their conversation, on January 10, 1903, Chizhov called on Kleigels to inform him of labor unrest at one of the factories and said he feared the workers were "acting under somebody's direction, perhaps the newly formed union."<sup>31</sup> Chizhov then relayed information which one of the local factory inspectors who was trusted by the workers, V. P. Litvinov-Falinskii, had given him about de-

<sup>29</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> Report of the chief factory inspector in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraiia," pp. 292-296.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

velopments in the workers' organization. Litvinov-Falinskii had been visited by a delegation of workers who explained that the membership of the newly forming organization was divided between proponents of close cooperation with the police and those who wished to organize independently. Concerned about the police agents in the organization and mistrustful of the extravagant promises made by organizers, the workers wanted reassurance from the inspector that it was safe to join. General Kleigels immediately summoned the head of the St. Petersburg Okhrana section and instructed him to inform the department of police that, if indeed the police were the instigators of the current unrest in the factories, they should recall their agents and forthwith end it. The incident confirmed Kleigels in his opinion that matters had to be taken out of the hands of the police, and a report to this effect was sent to Witte.<sup>32</sup>

As soon as Witte received the report of these events from Chizhov, he forwarded it with a note marked "top secret" to Plehve and requested further information about the organization. Witte also consulted his subordinates in the factory inspectorate, including Chizhov and Litvinov-Falinskii, who provided whatever information they could gather from the workers. Gratified to learn that a significant group within the organization's leadership leaned away from police domination toward less constricting ties with the ministry of finance, Witte decided to take steps to force the curtailment of Zubatov's activities. He first wrote to Plehve suggesting that approval of the organization's statutes be withheld until a committee on mutual-aid societies for workers set up by the late minister Sipiagin finished its report. This committee, chaired by Witte's assistant, Prince A. D. Obolenskii, was sure to keep the interests of the ministry of finance uppermost in its deliberations. The unrest in the factories put Plehve's support of the Zubatovite movement in a bad light, and, not wishing to press the issue, Plehve agreed to delay official approval of the statutes.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-296.

<sup>33</sup> Two notes of Witte to Plehve in *ibid.*, pp. 292, 296-297.

Confronted with bureaucratic resistance and realizing that the further success of his organization depended on overcoming opposition in the ministry of finance, Zubatov began cultivating relations with Count Witte. In February 1903, he even managed to gain an audience with Witte and, charmed by the clever minister, came away convinced that soon, as one of his assistants put it, "both Plehve and Witte will be eating from the same spoon."<sup>34</sup> Zubatov also put pressure on Gapon to play a more active role in the organization, hoping that the popular priest could alleviate some of the workers' suspicions and reassure local authorities like Kleigels of the organization's merit. Gapon was invited to attend meetings with Zubatov's assistants, and Sokolov came to see him more often. Although convinced that workers' organizations were essential for the future of Russia, Gapon decided that it "would be more sensible not to disclose what I intended to do in the future, and at the same time refrain from giving any help to Zubatov or his assistants."<sup>35</sup> His participation in the affairs of the organization continued to be nominal until the proposed statutes for the "Mutual-Aid Society of Workers in Machine Industries" were ready to be submitted for official approval.

Anticipating difficulties, Zubatov asked Gapon to write a memorandum to Witte advancing the idea that mutual-aid societies would benefit the national economy as well as the workers. "The report," Zubatov instructed, "must be written as if the workers themselves had composed it. . . . Witte may be of great help to us, and you must convince him that a professional organization of workers would be consistent with his own general policies."<sup>36</sup> When Gapon

<sup>34</sup> Letter of a close colleague of Zubatov, dated February 14, 1903, in "Pis'ma Mednikova Spiridovichu," *KA*, vol. 17, p. 199.

<sup>35</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54. There is some question about when this report was written. Gapon maintained that it was written during the summer and that Zubatov offered him 200 rubles in payment for it. Not wanting to arouse suspicion, Gapon accepted only 100 rubles; *ibid.*, p. 55. In April Witte had apparently received a memorandum on the labor problem, perhaps written by Gapon. See the interrogation of Kladov-

agreed, Zubatov instructed Sokolov first to inform the workers that Witte would not approve the statutes and then to introduce them to the priest who could help them gain Witte's support. Vasilii Kladovnikov, a twenty-five-year-old mechanic who was close to Zubatov and later became an ally of Gapon, recalled following Sokolov to the Theological Academy where he first met Gapon. The workers' delegation submitted Gapon's report to Witte, who asked them whether they had composed it themselves and, upon receiving an affirmative reply, suggested that they all become journalists!<sup>37</sup> Despite Witte's sarcastic remark, the statutes were approved by the officials of the ministry of the interior on March 8, 1903, and took effect in October of the same year.

Meanwhile the organization in St. Petersburg was racked by dissension from within; there were rivalries among the leaders; meetings in the halls of the Temperance Society were poorly attended; and an atmosphere of antagonism hung over the entire project. Although Gapon was given permission to open a workers' meeting with a prayer and to say a few words, as indicated by a request to Bishop Sergii dated March 11, 1903,<sup>38</sup> generally he stayed behind the scenes. When he did appear, it was something of an occasion, as Varnashev, one of his principal adherents, recalled:

Gapon dropped by infrequently but took no active part. Whenever he came he was surrounded by groups of workers with whom he carried on discussions before and after the meetings. He frequently aided workers financially with sums of five or ten rubles because the mutual-aid fund was not functioning yet, and there

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nikov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 324. A covering letter by Witte, dated April 1903, did mention a memorandum he received on this subject. See Trusova, *et al.*, eds., *Nachalo pervoi russkoi revoliutsii* (hereafter cited as 1905), document 2, pp. 289-290.

<sup>37</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 52. See also request of workers addressed to the bishop in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 288.

were always those in need. He helped workers with advice and through his connections. During the meetings he would sit quietly, attentively listening all the time, occasionally taking notes. But he became very animated when some of the most simple and backward workers got up to speak. He would nod approvingly, voice his support, and help the speaker find words to express his thoughts. No matter what was said, he always gave encouragement.<sup>39</sup>

Gapon kept himself informed of what was going on in the organization through workers who attended the meetings and reported to him everything that transpired.<sup>40</sup> He especially cultivated contacts with more active workers who had leadership potential, and many of them came to visit him regularly. Perhaps envious of Gapon's easy rapport with the workers, Zubatov expressed embarrassment over the priest's informal behavior: ". . . for example, he would go along with the workers on a boat ride. They would settle on some grassy island with food and wine; soon singing would begin, and finally they would dance. Father Gapon, picking up the skirts of his robe, excelled with his usual vigor."<sup>41</sup> Gapon's critical attitude toward the Zubatov approach had not abated, and in his discussions with workers the priest often criticized their organization. He was not afraid to voice his opposition to Zubatov in person, but the two continued to collaborate.

It is unclear when the idea of forming his own organization first occurred to Gapon. In his autobiography, he recalls being asked by workers on a number of occasions to take over the organization, but he hesitated. He must have discussed the idea with Zubatov also, suggesting that the authorities might look more kindly on an organization di-

<sup>39</sup> Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei. (Vospominaniia)," p. 185. See also the description of the first meeting of Varnashev with Gapon, *ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>40</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>41</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 169.



rected by a cleric than they did on one directed clandestinely by a secret police officer. In any case, Gapon's contacts with workers built the base for an independent organization under the guidance of the church. Gapon laid the groundwork well, indirectly suggesting the possibility to his friends among the workers and even attempting to involve some of his fellow students at the Theological Academy.<sup>42</sup> But when the workers openly suggested he take over the organization, Gapon continued to demur and, until the late spring of 1903, refused to take action. His change of heart, according to his autobiography, took place in the following manner:

On the eighth of May 1903, five artisans whom I knew to be honest and intelligent people came to me at the academy. One of them, Vassilieff, marched beside me on the fateful twenty-second of January 1905, and was killed at my side. . . . They argued at length, showing the necessity of joining Zubatov's organization in order to capture it for our own use. We met again at their lodgings, and after a long discussion I yielded. Then and there we organized ourselves into a secret committee.<sup>43</sup>

The evidence of those who knew Gapon well (Kladovnikov, Varnashev, Karelin, *et al.*) does not contradict the priest's claim that even at this early time he consciously evolved a plan to exploit his police contacts, win over the workers, and then to evolve a program for them. "It was

<sup>42</sup> For example, Gapon tried to recruit his fellow student, the future "Mad Monk Illiodor," a coadjutor and later a bitter enemy of Rasputin. See S. Trufanoff, *The Mad Monk of Russia*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>43</sup> Gapon, *The Story of My Life*, pp. 105-106. Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 106, wrote that it was Gapon who approached the workers rather than the opposite. Actually they seem to be referring to different meetings, as the dates in Gapon's autobiography are given in New Style; thus the meeting of May 8 described by Gapon would precede by a fortnight the meeting of May 9 described by Karelin. See editorial comment in Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, note 60, p. 142.

clear to me," Gapon maintained, "that real revolutionaries had little influence over the masses since they could work only in secret and in a restricted circle of workers, while the rest of the masses were inaccessible to them. I as a priest also had the advantage of being able to develop close relationships with the people."<sup>44</sup> Karelin corroborated Gapon's account in his assurance to a friend: "We have investigated him most thoroughly and formed a very favorable impression. . . . He is undoubtedly devoted to the idea of the liberation of the working class, but, since he does not consider underground party activity very useful, he finds it essential to form an open organization of working masses according to a fixed plan and hopes to succeed if groups of conscious workers gather around and support him."<sup>45</sup>

Having decided to form his own organization, Gapon proceeded to create a leadership core including the supporters he had already recruited, many of whom became his principal assistants. He visited various localities where workers gathered and made a point of involving himself with the most outspoken and critical among them. He was particularly interested in workers with revolutionary backgrounds. In this manner he met Aleksei Egorovich and Vera Markovna Karelin, both former members of Social Democratic circles who had returned to St. Petersburg in 1895 after three years in prison and exile. Aleksei Karelin, a thirty-three-year-old printer, had excellent contacts among the workers as well as a reputation for honesty and dedication. Although at first the couple were reluctant to join Gapon's group, eventually they played crucial roles in the organization.<sup>46</sup>

Gapon took these first steps in the spring of 1903, but he

<sup>44</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 56.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted by Pavlov, "Iz vospominanii o rabochem soiuze i sviashchennike Gapone," pp. 26-27.

<sup>46</sup> The Karelins were former members of the Brusnev circle in St. Petersburg. See their short biographies in Zelikson-Bobrovskaia, ed., *Pervaiia russkaia revoliutsiia v Peterburge 1905 g.: Sbornik 1*, pp. 141-144; and recollections of Karelina, "Na zare rabochego dvizheniia v S. Peterburge," pp. 12-20.

could not devote his full time to the enterprise until he had finished his course at the Theological Academy. After graduating in June, he found himself in an extremely difficult position. The ecclesiastical authorities recommended that he leave St. Petersburg because he was becoming too preoccupied with nonreligious matters. As the metropolitan later explained, "The bishop was informed of his unreliability and did not dare appoint him to any position in the capital. When he complained of financial difficulties, he was offered financial assistance."<sup>47</sup> Unable to find employment in St. Petersburg that summer, the impoverished priest rented a small room and lived like an ascetic, subsisting, in the words of Zubatov, on "black bread and olives."<sup>48</sup>

So pitiful was Gapon's state that some workers finally appealed to Zubatov to assist him. Zubatov later claimed that Gapon accepted a subsidy from him of 100 rubles a month, a claim which has created the widespread impression that Gapon was a paid agent of the Okhrana. Actually, Zubatov's insinuation that Gapon was on a regular police payroll, and his further claim that the city governor also paid Gapon a similar sum to act as a double agent and spy on Zubatov,<sup>49</sup> were highly exaggerated. Zubatov's statement that he began paying Gapon because of the priest's financial difficulties is refutation in itself of the charge that Gapon received an additional 100 rubles monthly from the city governor. If Gapon had such an income, he would not have been reduced to the abject poverty described in numerous sources.

Gapon never hid his relations with the police and other outside sources from his assistants, and in his autobiography he carefully detailed every instance of money having been given to him and his organization by various agencies and individuals.<sup>50</sup> He reported an offer of 200 rubles from

<sup>47</sup> Statement of Metropolitan Antonii in Shilov, "Peterburgskoe dukhovenstvo," p. 195.

<sup>48</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 169.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>50</sup> In his autobiography Gapon mentions several instances when he received money from police sources. Documentary evidence confirms only two—Zubatov's statement and the receipt of 360 rubles to open one of

Zubatov in payment for a report he had written, and confessed to accepting half that sum. It is possible that Zubatov intended to start regular payments to Gapon and planned to offer him money under different pretexts until a monthly subsidy became acceptable, but evidence does not indicate any payments beyond the single 100-ruble sum mentioned by both Zubatov and Gapon.<sup>51</sup>

Gapon was in constant contact with Zubatov that summer. For a time he even lived with Sokolov. "Every morning," the police master recalled, "they came to my apartment (before I left for work) allegedly to clarify some theoretical disagreements between themselves. He (Gapon) took down all my words in his notebook."<sup>52</sup> Despite their close collaboration during these months, the priest and the police chief were growing farther apart in their views on labor organizations. Zubatov considered the talk of free, independent unions of workers "dangerous heresy";<sup>53</sup> Gapon meanwhile attacked Zubatov's agents before the workers and, in discussions with the Okhrana chief himself, for accepting regular payments from the secret police. Under the circumstances, Gapon could hardly have been on the police payroll, and Zubatov's attempts after 1905 to portray Gapon as a regularly paid agent who had "gone wrong" must be regarded as a vengeful slur. In reality, Gapon was all too independent of police control.

Despite his disillusionment with the Zubatovite organization and his intention to wrench the union from police

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the tearooms. No documentary evidence has been found to show that Gapon received money from the police on other than these occasions to which he openly admits.

<sup>51</sup> Zubatov and Gapon are probably both talking about the same 100 rubles. In his account Zubatov gives the impression that Gapon was regularly receiving monthly payments. However, his description of Gapon's destitute situation can refer only to the summer of 1903 when Gapon had graduated from the academy and could not find employment. Since Zubatov was exiled at the end of that summer, the period during which such payments could have been made to Gapon was a month or two at the longest.

<sup>52</sup> Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 169.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

hands, Gapon remained on friendly terms with Zubatov. He could not have dreamed of taking over the organization's leadership without the approval of key officials in the police department, local authorities, and certain groups in the ministries. Besides, no covert coup or conspiratorial network could have escaped the watchful eyes of the police. Therefore Gapon's own organizing activities during the summer were contained within the broader framework of projects initiated and approved by Zubatov. But the greater the opposition to police unions among the workers and the officials, the more plausible Gapon's alternative of an independent union under the guidance of the church became. Although Zubatov disagreed with Gapon, he finally gave the priest permission to try his plan and promised no one would be arrested for activity connected with the new venture. Despite the priest's later claim (supported by other sources close to him) that organizing did not begin until after Zubatov's departure from St. Petersburg in August, activity was well under way earlier.<sup>54</sup> Gapon held meetings with his supporters; a suitable permanent meeting place for the organization—a clubroom (or "tearoom," as it was called)—was found in the Vyborg district of the city while Zubatov was still in St. Petersburg.

The dismissal of Zubatov resulted from a growing divergence between his policies and those favored by Plehve. Having come to St. Petersburg believing that he would have a free hand in promoting trade union activity, Zubatov felt betrayed when Plehve reneged on his promises of complete support. Conversely, the minister of finance, despite his initial opposition to the organization's statutes, seemed more encouraging and sympathetic than Zubatov dared hope. According to Zubatov, Witte gave every impression of being in complete agreement with him. He related how

<sup>54</sup> Zubatov was dismissed on August 19, but on August 1 Gapon and his supporters had already rented premises for a clubroom (23 Orenburg Street, Vyborg district), and on August 19 they signed a three-year lease. See the memorandum to the police in Kobiakov, "Gapon i okhrannoe otdelenie do 1905 goda," pp. 33-34.

Witte exclaimed during one of their interviews, "We are actors performing on the same stage, but separated by a partition. The public sees that we are acting out the same play, but we are unaware of this. It is very unfortunate that we had to act separately for such a long time."<sup>55</sup> Zubatov was quick to accept Witte's flattering words at face value. In all probability Witte deliberately cultivated the discouraged police chief in order to drive a wedge between Zubatov and Plehve, knowing only too well how the latter would react when he found out about their contacts. As Zubatov became more frustrated in his plans, his criticism of Plehve became more outspoken. This precipitated a confrontation, and in the end Zubatov was given twenty-four hours to leave St. Petersburg.<sup>56</sup>

A strike organized by one of the police unions in Odessa served as the official explanation for the dismissal of Zubatov. What started as a peaceful dispute over economics turned into a general strike that had to be suppressed by force. As most of those responsible were Jewish workers, their punishment was particularly harsh. But the labor issue was no more than a convenient immediate excuse for Zubatov's downfall, for no measures were taken against his other organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Zubatov left St. Petersburg in disgrace on August 19, 1903. Gapon was among the very few who came to see him off at the station. They parted as friends, and Gapon later told Varnashev that, on parting, Zubatov cried and asked

<sup>55</sup> Zubatov's version of his dismissal is given in "K istorii zubatovshchiny," pp. 86-99. His version is corroborated by several officials of the ministry of the interior. See the comments of the director of police, Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, p. 71; and Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 153. In his memoirs, Witte denies any connection with Zubatov, stating that he only met Zubatov in July 1903, and did not have any dealings with him (Witte, *Vospominaniia*, vol. II, pp. 210-211).

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of the reasons for Zubatov's dismissal, see Schneiderman, pp. 583ff. Also Liubimov, "Otryvki iz vospominanii," pp. 75f.

him not to abandon the workers' organization.<sup>57</sup> Zubatov even gave the priest names of sympathetic officials in the administration. His departure untied Gapon's hands, and the priest vigorously plunged into organizing activities. Gathering his supporters together, he proposed that they scrap the structure borrowed from Moscow, rid the organization of its administrative "nurses," and, most important, attain financial independence. He suggested that they start by opening the clubhouse, which had been rented for three years the very day Zubatov was dismissed, and by drafting statutes for the new organization.

These suggestions were unanimously accepted. In broad terms it was agreed that something would be offered to attract workers of all ages into the organization: young people would be entertained by dances and concerts; more mature workers would be tempted by lectures and by the possibility of gathering at the club during their leisure hours; older workers would be attracted by the opportunity to provide for sickness and retirement. All these groups would be united and directed by decisions made at general meetings, and their activities would be inspired, as Gapon put it, by the "living word."

The rented premises were remodeled by the workers to serve as a clubhouse. "Among the chartered members there was a painter, a carpenter, a smith; and there was no lack of helpers."<sup>58</sup> Workers brought whatever pieces of furniture they could spare, and benches were built in the halls. A piano was obtained, and a library with a reading room was begun with contributions. The walls were adorned with pictures, among them portraits of Russian tsars, and icons hung prominently in the corner. On August 30, 1903, the clubhouse was blessed in an inaugural ceremony. Thereafter it opened every evening at six on workdays and at two on nonworking days and stayed open until midnight. Tea and refreshments were served, but alcohol was prohibited.

<sup>57</sup> Varnashev, p. 190. See also Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 170.

<sup>58</sup> Varnashev, p. 191.

Three times a week meetings were held in the hall, lectures were read and general discussion organized. Every meeting opened and closed with a prayer.<sup>59</sup>

The clubhouse was open to all. Visitors purchased tickets for twenty kopecks, which entitled them to visit for one month and attend meetings.<sup>60</sup> The structure of the future organization evolved as follows: in the center stood Gapon with *his closest confidants*, who were quite well informed of all matters pertaining to the organization, including Gapon's contacts with the authorities. In this tight circle—the "secret committee," as it began to be called—were Varnashev, Vasil'ev, and later the Karelins and Kuzin. Gapon's "staff," including the "secret committee" and all elected officers, came from the chartered membership of the organization, a group numbering fifteen to twenty at first but greatly expanded in time. As the organization grew, new clubhouses were opened at various locations in the city, each with its own chartered membership organized into a "circle of responsible individuals" who signed the lease of the clubhouse as guarantors and accepted responsibility before the authorities for the conduct of business. Those joining this group had to be recommended by at least two charter members and were admitted only by a unanimous vote of the entire group. They were obliged to "behave responsibly"; otherwise they were liable to be expelled. Only charter members were eligible for the principal elective offices.<sup>61</sup>

Most important work was carried out within the circle of Gapon's trusted assistants, "the staff," with whom he met regularly on Saturday evenings. Their discussions were candid and open, focusing on the purposes, methods, and means of organization. Through these intimate, congenial

<sup>59</sup> There is a detailed description of the clubroom activities in Gapon's memorandum to the director of police published in Kobiakov, pp. 33ff. See also Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 59.

<sup>60</sup> Kobiakov, p. 34, particularly note 1 on p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> Kobiakov, p. 36; Varnashev, p. 191. The circle grew constantly in size as other clubhouses opened, some circles counted several hundred individuals.



talks, the staff developed a consensus of opinion. Gapon considered the frequent collective exchanges of ideas as a training course for leadership, and in truth a united cadre of leaders evolved, dedicated to ideals which had been agreed upon in their long hours of talks.<sup>62</sup>

Gapon believed it essential to gain the trust of the working masses, and considerable efforts were made to present the clubhouse in a favorable light. He was particularly sensitive to accusations of ties with the police and speculation about his sources of funds, and he took careful measures to counteract damaging charges. To allow members the broadest possible participation in the administration of the clubhouse, officers were elected to serve without compensation for terms of only three months.<sup>63</sup> Frequent elections fostered a sense of democratic participation and direct involvement in running the clubhouse. Gapon was scrupulous in the matter of finances, and special representatives outside the "responsible circle" were elected at meetings to check on the administration of funds. According to Gapon "... the strictness with which our accounts were kept helped toward the rapid expansion and growing popularity of the organization."<sup>64</sup>

Most of Gapon's assistants, like the priest himself, were former disciples of Zubatov. At first their goals remained similar to those of their former mentor, but their methods of achieving those goals differed increasingly. From the earliest days of his association with Zubatov, Gapon had believed it necessary to give the workers more independence and to reduce visible police control. In a letter to the former police chief written early in September 1903, Gapon addressed himself to the problems of developing his labor organization. Warmly greeting Zubatov as "Deeply esteemed and unforgettable Sergei Vasil'evich," Gapon described the difficulties encountered in establishing the clubhouse. He acknowledged his debt to Zubatov, but at the

<sup>62</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moi zhizni*, p. 59.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59; Kobiakov, p. 36.

<sup>64</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moi zhizni*, p. 59.

same time clearly distinguished his approach from that of the police union organizer:

The matter of legalization (in one way or another) of the tearooms—clubs—is the question of utmost importance . . . we want to guarantee our autonomy and independence as much as possible. The city governor is very interested in our club, and the day after tomorrow I am to make a report to him. It seems I will have to make a report to the director of police, Lopukhin, as well.

We are not forgetting you, our teacher—we remember. Only recently, at a meeting of the circle, when some question was raised about you, people boldly spoke up for you, remarkably boldly and fervently, defending you and your ideas. It made a good impression. In short, we do not conceal that the idea of a special kind of labor movement is your idea, but we underscore that the connection with the police is now broken (this is really true); our cause is just and open; the police can only check on our activities; they cannot keep us on a leash.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Text of the letter in Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 170.

#### CHAPTER IV

### *The Assembly of the Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg*

Essentially the basic idea is to build a nest among the factory and mill workers where Rus', a truly Russian spirit, would prevail. From thence healthy and self-sacrificing fledglings could fly forth to defend their tsar and country and aid their fellow workers.

Gapon (from a memorandum to  
the director of police)

Gapon sought official support for his undertaking at an opportune time. With Zubatov gone,<sup>1</sup> local authorities were left with the problem of controlling large bodies of agitated workers who had been stimulated by the talk of labor organizations. Regardless of their feelings toward Zubatov (many of whose followers remained in the city), all supporters of the regime agreed that it was imperative to prevent the spread of revolutionary influences within this volatile segment of the population. Means had to be found to placate the workers and divert their energies before revolutionaries took advantage of the situation.

Gapon offered a solution to the problem and at the same time promised to eliminate the most objectionable features of the Zubatovite police unions. From the very start he could count on the support of those who had sympathized with Zubatov. He continuously visited various officials, including some of the more prominent members of the Okhrana—General A. S. Skandrakov and the notorious

<sup>1</sup> The departure of Zubatov produced a sigh of relief in many quarters, particularly in the business community where he acquired a reputation of being "a socialist and a revolutionary." See Korelin, "Russkii 'politseiskii sotsializm.'" p. 55.

agent, M. I. Gurovich.<sup>2</sup> Through his connections in official circles he was able to obtain provisional approval for the operation of the clubhouse, but gaining permanent sanction for a workers' organization was a more difficult matter.

Before the organization could be legalized, Gapon had to win the support of Zubatov's former opponents by proving that his plan would improve industrial relations. This was no mean task, and Gapon exerted all his energies visiting the city governor's office, which represented the local city police, talking with ecclesiastical authorities, and seeking out his more influential friends in St. Petersburg society.<sup>3</sup> He found the process of recruiting support slow and frustrating. His difficulties were compounded by personal problems. He was unable to find work in St. Petersburg, but, not wanting to leave the capital, turned down the offer of a teaching position in a provincial seminary.<sup>4</sup> With no income of his own, he relied on borrowing and on the aid of friends. His state of exhaustion worried his assistants, and Varnashev later recalled, "One thing was clear to me: Gapon's efforts in this connection were very trying. I clearly sensed this by the discomfort I felt at seeing him tired and worn out, unsure of success, after a whole day spent in the reception rooms of officials. I felt that we were unscrupulously exploiting this man."<sup>5</sup>

Despite his personal frustrations, Gapon enthusiastically took part in the affairs of the clubhouse and found the response of the workers encouraging. Meetings in the clubhouse were advertised as open, and participants were encouraged to express their thoughts freely. Members correctly assumed, however, that police agents kept a close watch on their activities.<sup>6</sup> Since the permission given the clubhouse was only provisional, everyone was aware that

<sup>2</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei," p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Police agents were present at meetings, and police files contained detailed reports of the proceedings and the conduct of meetings. See copies of police reports in Bukhbinder, "k istorii Sobraniia," pp. 290-291.

the slightest mishap might prove fatal to the future of the organization. The proceedings and discussions were very conservatively oriented. Occasionally workers who were inclined toward the opposition visited meetings, and Gapon's assistants had difficulty holding the discussion within acceptable limits without denying participants the right to speak. On the whole the rapport between the leadership and the audience was good enough to counter oppositional influences and to override speakers with revolutionary leanings, especially when political or theoretical questions were raised.<sup>7</sup>

Since an open organization of workers with claims to independent status was unprecedented, every effort was made to give the group as conservative an appearance as possible. The proposed name of the organization, "The Workers Union" (*Rabochii soiuz*), was scrapped, and even the term "society" (*obshchestvo*) was considered too radical. Finally a very traditionalist form with Slavophile connotations, "The Assembly" (*sobranie*), was settled upon and the designation "Russian" was included in order to give a nationalist coloration. The full title of the organization was "The Assembly of the Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg," or simply, "The Assembly."<sup>8</sup> There was some debate on the official seal for the organization, the inclusion in it of a cross being objected to by some. Gapon advocated use of a cross as a sign of self-sacrifice, and the majority of his assistants finally concurred.<sup>9</sup> The statutes of the organization (a constitution and by-laws) were prepared by Gapon during the month of September. They were discussed by his staff the following month, and in early November statutes were ready to be submitted to the authorities for approval.

<sup>7</sup> Varnashev, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191; and Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 60.

<sup>9</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 63. Varnashev and Karelin cast the only votes against inclusion of the cross in the seal. See Varnashev, p. 196.

Meanwhile the future Assembly strove to evolve a specific character of its own, with the emphasis on legal status and independence. The removal of visible evidence of any ties with the police, especially of persons compromised as agents of Zubatov, was of utmost importance. Attempts were made to attract Ushakov into the organization, and he did join the responsible circle,<sup>10</sup> but in the beginning of November he was among a number of known Zubatovites excluded from the clubhouse.<sup>11</sup> Gapon's diligence in divesting the organization of police agents, his Herculean efforts to muster support, and his patient struggle to wipe out traces of "Zubatovshchina" impressed even the more suspicious long-time activists among the workers. Karelin told a friend, "Remember I spoke of the known agents of Zubatov (U-[shako]v, P-[ikuno]v, K-[rasivskii]i)? They are no longer in our founding group. Gapon was able to get rid of them."<sup>12</sup>

Gapon prepared a long memorandum, copies of which were sent to Plehve, Kleigels, and other important officials, on the purposes of the proposed organization and the functioning of the clubhouse.<sup>13</sup> He argued that the success of the clubhouse thus far was evidence of the organization's viability and proved the dependability of its leadership. The stilted and formal style of the memorandum, so unlike the unrestrained prose of Gapon, suggested that the document was extensively edited by someone familiar with bureaucratic procedure, perhaps an official.<sup>14</sup> The memorandum expressed extremely reactionary, nationalistic sentiments and frequently engaged in xenophobic attacks against foreigners as the principal villains in labor difficulties. It described the clubhouse as a truly Russian solution to the labor problem, "*a place where factory workers can truly*

<sup>10</sup> Letter of Gapon to Zubatov in Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 170.

<sup>11</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 60; and Varnashev, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> I. Pavlov, "Iz vospominanii o rabochem soiuze," p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> The text of the report of October 13, 1903, from the files of the police department is given in Kobiakov, "Gapon i okhrannoe otделение do 1905 goda," pp. 33-45. See Gapon's comments on the report in his letter to Zubatov in Zubatov, "Zubatovshchina," p. 171.

<sup>14</sup> Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, p. 273.

*undertake earnest, practical efforts to refine and educate themselves and engage in sensible, sober and honest activities during their leisure time.*" The purpose of the leadership was described as

... a noble endeavor, under the guidance of truly Russian educated laymen and clergy, to foster among the workers a sober, Christian view of life and to instill the principle of mutual aid, thereby helping to improve the lives and working conditions of laborers without violent disruption of law and order in their relations with employers and the government.<sup>15</sup>

The patriotic theme was repeated frequently, and the Assembly was portrayed as an institution designed to raise loyal workers who could not be tempted by enemies of Russia to challenge the "precious heritage of our fatherland."<sup>16</sup> "The tearoom-club . . . is the first attempt to create an environment for the sensible awakening and strengthening of Russian national consciousness among the workers."<sup>17</sup> Non-Russians, like the Jewish labor leaders involved in the Odessa strikes of 1903, were dismissed as "false prophets" of the Russian workers, and even the influence of the intelligentsia was to be diminished.

The main argument in favor of the Assembly, one widely accepted at the time, was that when the working class reached a certain level of development it would inevitably seek organization and independent activity. Therefore,

*... it would be better to provide it with a legal outlet. It would be better to allow workers to satisfy their natural desire to organize for self-help and mutual aid and engage in sensible independent activity explicitly and openly rather than to allow them to organize (as they surely will) and manifest their independence secretly and guilefully, harming themselves and*

<sup>15</sup> Kobiakov, p. 36. Italics in the original.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

*perhaps the entire nation. We particularly underscore the danger of exploitation by others, enemies of Russia.*<sup>18</sup>

The memorandum criticized Zubatov's approach, claiming it stirred considerable interest and created a great deal of publicity, but failed to produce workers with a serious commitment to improving their lot. In contrast, Gapon's clubhouse provided direction and leadership, enabling workers to commit themselves to bettering their lives through peaceful integration into Russian society. The memorandum did not deny the police a constructive part in the social process, but warned against "experiments in the field of independent activity of a social organism."<sup>19</sup> The report argued that security organizations, by definition, are charged with preventive responsibilities, to insure enforcement of the laws and the maintenance of order. Although the police could initiate worthwhile projects, once having given the impetus they were bound to defer to independent civic action, and to remain in the background as "a vigilant observer and stern supervisor."<sup>20</sup> The police in Moscow and initially in St. Petersburg, the memorandum noted, had failed to follow this practice.

Gapon's main objection to Zubatov's method was that it prevented the workers from feeling and acting as an independent, responsible group. By their overt interference and covert methods, the police had managed to alienate much of the labor organization's potential mass following. The responsible circle of the clubhouse, on the other hand, conducted its work openly, honestly, and independently, winning confidence and support among the workers. The circle ran business in the clubhouse without ties to the police, although "naturally there can *and must* be control over the activities of the circle by the governmental (police) authorities."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44. Italics in the original.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.



Father Gapon did not conceal his ties with the officials from his immediate assistants, and they were generally known among the workers. He argued that these contacts were essential to the cause, and his supporters accepted this explanation. In the words of Varnashev,

The rank and file was not discriminating toward individuals in their official capacities. The workers clearly realized that in their undertaking nothing could be accomplished without contacts with officials. They fully understood the difficulties facing our organization and justly gave Gapon his due, recognizing in him the only individual who could, and would, accomplish everything.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed the whole enterprise centered more and more on Father Gapon and his relations with the officialdom. The authorities would never have considered allowing the workers such independence in promoting their interests were it not for Gapon. His priestly status undoubtedly was instrumental in gaining their confidence, as was his willingness, even eagerness, to be held personally responsible for activities in the clubhouse. Ideally, Gapon hoped the organization could be patrolled exclusively through him. Thus he diligently kept General Kleigels and his successor, General I. A. Fullon, informed of the organization's activities. Since intelligence obtained from other sources did not contradict the information supplied by Gapon, the city governor's office grew to rely on Gapon and encouraged his endeavors. Until the very eve of Bloody Sunday the police authorities had no reason to regret this support, and all reports submitted by the local authorities in St. Petersburg were highly favorable toward the Assembly.

By November 1903, Gapon's efforts were beginning to show results. The memorandum submitted to the director of police must have pleased Lopukhin, who even donated sixty rubles to the library with a "hint" that the subscription

<sup>22</sup> Varnashev, p. 193.

## THE ASSEMBLY

list should include only conservative papers.<sup>23</sup> On November 9, a delegation of workers representing the responsible circle submitted the proposed statutes of the Assembly, signed by thirty-six members, to the office of the city governor, which promptly forwarded the document to the ministry of the interior, noting that it had no objection to the request "in view of the beneficial aims proposed by the founders of the Assembly as the basic principles of the organization."<sup>24</sup>

The police department had no objections either, provided certain specific changes were made. The requirements were (1) that the library be placed under the supervision of an individual approved by the city governor; (2) that lectures, especially those dealing with labor matters, be conducted only in the presence of a police official; and (3) that the funds of the Assembly not be used to aid workers during strikes. Other changes were designed to increase the city governor's control over the affairs of the Assembly by giving him the power to approve the election of principal officers. Since the original version of the statutes acknowledged the complete authority of the city governor over the Assembly, including the right, with the consent of the ministry of the interior, to close it at his pleasure (par. 62), further clarification and expansion of his control was looked upon as a detail, perhaps very annoying, but in no way crucial.

### The statutes of the Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill

<sup>23</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 110. The English text reported that Lopukhin gave a "strong hint" that conservative papers be subscribed to, which the Russian translation rendered as "strict instructions." Gapon related that he accepted the money with "great disgust." It is doubtful that he did, since the money was an indication that the director of police supported his proposal and as such must have been welcome. He is more likely to have been disgusted with the small size of the donation.

<sup>24</sup> Editorial note 65, p. 144, in Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*. For Gapon's own version, see *ibid.*, pp. 60-61. Gapon wrote that the draft of the statutes was returned in a "mutilated condition." This was an exaggeration; the changes were relatively minor, emphasizing the already dominant authority of the city governor.

Workers of the City of St. Petersburg contained sixty-four paragraphs.<sup>25</sup> The first paragraph defined the aims and purposes of the Assembly in language similar to that of the memorandum: (a) to allow members to use their leisure time soberly and sensibly for their spiritual, moral, and material benefit; (b) to stimulate and strengthen Russian national consciousness; (c) to inculcate and develop more informed views on the rights and obligations of workers; (d) to provide an opportunity for members to improve their lives and working conditions through independent activity. The statutes avoided the question of labor almost completely, mentioning only that lectures could be organized to "explain to the worker his legal status and indicate lawful means by which he could emerge from darkness into the light" (par. 2,c). This last provision strongly contrasted with the statutes of Zubatovite organizations where labor questions predominated. Gapon's statutes instead emphasized the Assembly's cultural and educational role.

The membership was open to workers of both sexes, but "only those of Russian descent and of the Christian faith," with the exception of those eligible "Christian workers who are not of Russian descent, but are Russian subjects" (par. 19 and note 2). The regular membership was to consist of two categories enjoying equal privileges: the first paid one ruble as an entry fee and fifty kopecks in monthly dues, and the second paid half this amount (par. 4). After a six-month probationary period regular members were entitled to receive assistance from the mutual fund (par. 10, note 1). In the organizational structure of the Assembly, the "circle of responsible individuals" stood above the regular membership. A fifteen-man governing board (with five alternates) was elected from the circle by the general membership to serve for a three-month period (pars. 17 and 36). The board elected its own officers.

Towering over this administrative structure was the "representative" of the Assembly, to be elected for a three-year

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 1 for the full text of the statutes.

term from the ranks of "educated laymen or clergy" (par. 15). The representative was "empowered to deal with all affairs of the Assembly": he represented the organization in all its dealings, conducted official correspondence, directed all its activities, and bore personal responsibility for its conduct (par. 16). The city governor confirmed his election, and the ecclesiastical authorities also gave their consent if the elected representative happened to be a member of the clergy (par. 16, note 1). The position of representative was created specifically for Gapon, and it reflected his dominant position within the organization.

The activities proposed in the statutes reflected a concern for satisfying the immediate needs of the workers. The plans were modest, and all controversial provisions had been removed. Modeled on the statutes of the Zubatovite organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Assembly statutes expanded provisions for social welfare, envisaging establishment of old-age homes, hospitals, schools, and libraries for the use of members.<sup>26</sup> The statutes also provided for the establishment of a cooperative store and left possibilities open for further expansion in similar directions. From the very start, the Assembly organizers considered the statutes as a preliminary framework only and expected to expand activities as the organization grew.<sup>27</sup> The authorities, fully aware of these intentions, were willing to tolerate certain limited deviations from the provisions of the statutes provided the Assembly fulfilled its main purpose of keeping revolutionaries away from the workers. An unspoken and tenuous understanding existed between the organizers and the officials that the statutes constituted a legal facade under which the Assembly would be permitted to function.

Despite this unspoken understanding, the statutes had to

<sup>26</sup> For the comparison of various Zubatovite statutes with the statutes of the Assembly, see Sviatlovskii, *Professional'noe divizhenie v Rossii*, pp. 58-60, 76-77; Grigor'evskii (pseudonym of M. Lunts), *Politseiskii sotsializm v Rossii*, pp. 21-23, 39-40; Morskoi, *Zubatovshchina*, pp. 71, 164-166; and Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>27</sup> See editorial comments to Zubatov, "K istorii zubatovshchiny," pp. 87-88.

conform to the letter of the law, and Gapon had been careful to remove all controversial provisions. The political structure of imperial Russia at the turn of the century had little tolerance for any form of association, and the laws provided virtually no outlet for unsupervised activity by any group: "Even home meetings held for amusement or entertainment were not exempt from police control."<sup>28</sup> Labor organizations, with the exception of mutual-aid societies formed to assist victims in cases of accident, sickness, unemployment, death, etc., were forbidden.<sup>29</sup> Even the approval of the statutes for Zubatov's organization in Moscow was "a completely exceptional phenomenon in Russian social history. At a time when generally all union organizations—whether they be composed of workers, peasants, or intelligentsia—were entirely forbidden, only the machine workers of Moscow were honored by such a privilege."<sup>30</sup>

While awaiting official approval of the statutes and continuing his activities in the clubhouse, Gapon kept up the endless rounds of visits to officials on behalf of the Assembly. His personal financial situation was desperate, forcing him to appeal to the ecclesiastical authorities for aid. During the Christmas holidays Gapon received a package containing 100 rubles from the metropolitan. When he went to thank the metropolitan in person, he was told to apply for the position of chaplain at the Transient Jail. Shortly thereafter he was appointed to this post with an annual salary of 2,000 rubles, which, according to Gapon, was used in large part to further the cause of the Assembly.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship between the unconventional priest and the St. Petersburg ecclesiastical hierarchy was characterized by ambivalence. Gapon contended that Metropolitan Antonii was favorably disposed toward him.<sup>32</sup> On several

<sup>28</sup> Walkin, *The Rise of Democracy in Pre-Revolutionary Russia*, p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>30</sup> Grigor'evskii, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 60 and 64.

<sup>32</sup> This is supported by Varnashev, p. 193, who heard about it from other sources.

occasions, notably that of Gapon's reinstatement at the academy, the metropolitan interceded on the priest's behalf. Gapon also took part in the activities of the Religious-Philosophical Society promoted by the metropolitan to encourage the exchange of views between educated laymen and progressive members of the clergy. Among the many prominent intellectuals who took part in the Society were Dmitrii S. Merezhkovskii, his wife, Zinaida Gippius, Vasilii V. Rozanov, Nikolai M. Minskii, and others.<sup>33</sup> Though the metropolitan encouraged Gapon's participation in the Society, he barely tolerated the priest's activities in the Assembly, resented Gapon's unwillingness to follow advice, and refused to become directly or personally involved in the Assembly's work.

Gapon originally had proposed that the church accept patronage of the workers' organization, and Antonii even considered appointing a bishop to head it, but the infusion of social and economic concerns compelled the metropolitan to withdraw. According to the metropolitan, he permitted the service of a priest in the organization, "but only as a representative of the church, as a teacher and the bearer of the faith."<sup>34</sup> When Father Gapon "petitioned the metropolitan for his blessing and permission to engage in this activity, permission was denied him."<sup>35</sup> Gapon's memoirs contradict the metropolitan's account. Since the statutes of the Assembly required confirmation by the city governor and the ecclesiastical authorities if the elected representative was a clergyman, technically the metropolitan could have prevented Gapon's installment in this post by withholding his approval. He did not exercise this power. On the matter of Gapon's appointment at the Transient Jail, the metropolitan (with no reference to his own initiatives on

<sup>33</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> For this statement of Metropolitan Antonii, see Shilov, "Peterburgskoe dukhovenstvo," p. 195. See also, for Gapon's version of his talks with the metropolitan, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>35</sup> See Shilov, "Peterburgskoe dukhovenstvo," p. 195, and Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 60.

Gapon's behalf) later stated that he had only approved a request from the jail administration.<sup>36</sup>

In the beginning of 1904, two important events significant to the future of the Assembly were taking place. On January 27, 1904, the Japanese naval forces attacked Russian ships at Port Arthur, and Russia found herself at war. In February of 1904, General Kleigels was replaced in the office of the city governor by General I. A. Fullon, a mild-mannered man with whom Gapon was soon able to establish close ties.<sup>37</sup> Fullon viewed Gapon's activity with considerable sympathy and throughout 1904 readily offered his assistance. With the beginning of the war the government became preoccupied with military affairs and the rising wave of opposition in society. The conservative, loyalist conduct of workers in the Assembly was a welcome relief from the general pattern of discontent, and official vigilance over the Assembly tended to relax. The ministry of the interior finally approved the statutes of the Assembly on February 15, 1904.

<sup>36</sup> Shilov, "Peterburgskoe dukhovenstvo," p. 195. The exact circumstances of Gapon's appointment as the chaplain of the Church of St. Michael of Tver at the Transient Jail on Konstantinogradovskaia Street are not clear. It is not known who recommended him, but the jail administration (under the jurisdictional control of the ministry of justice) requested that Father Gapon be appointed to the vacancy. Metropolitan Antonii approved the appointment. In his autobiography Gapon related how he was told of his appointment by the metropolitan (see Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 60). It is possible that the police authorities were instrumental in the appointment, but it should be remembered that the position was not a particularly lucrative nor time-consuming one. Gapon was well qualified for the position as a recent academy graduate interested in working among the lower classes that made up most of the population of the jail.

<sup>37</sup> General Fullon has been held generally responsible for the subsequent events leading to Bloody Sunday. He was accused of being too gentle and indecisive for the post he occupied. Witte accurately summarized the prevalent opinion in characterizing Fullon as "surely, by nature, a decent man in all respects. Very well brought-up, pleasant, but, of course, completely alien to police mentality, police methods and police character. He would have been more appropriately situated, for example, were he placed in charge of girls' schools in St. Petersburg" (Vitte, *Vospominaiia*, vol. II, p. 340).

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During the last months of 1903 and the early months of 1904, Gapon had gathered around himself a small band of supporters—his “staff” and “the circle”—who generally came from the ranks of the “labor aristocracy.” Economically and socially this group stood apart from the rest of the working masses. Varnashev provided the following description of the group:

Every one of them was a convinced agitator for the idea of the “Assembly,” but I would not be mistaken if I were to say that they all *shied away from politics* (*nedoliublivali politiku*) and were supporters of the peaceful professional movement. This could be partly explained by class and political consciousness, which allowed them to believe in the possibility of economic struggle without the attainment of political rights. About the latter they did not even think; instead they were convinced of the beneficent attitude of the authorities toward labor. The conservative nature of the responsible circle was also partly due to a certain respectability of its members, their family status and comparatively high material well-being. A monthly income of one hundred roubles was not uncommon in the machine industry. As a lathe operator in a small shop, I earned from one to two hundred roubles a month.<sup>38</sup>

Father Gapon exercised the dominant influence in the group primarily because he was a priest and had good relations with the authorities, but his theoretical grasp of the labor movement, politics, and economics was hardly stronger than that of his supporters. No doubt he sincerely desired to attain improvements in the lives of the working masses, but his conception of the problems facing the orga-

<sup>38</sup> Varnashev, p. 193. Italics in the original. These lines were written in 1922 and reflect a more Marxist outlook than would have been the case before 1905.



nization was very vague, particularly in relation to long-range plans. With the growth of the Assembly and the influx of new members, many of whom had revolutionary party experience and a first-hand knowledge of trade unionism, Gapon's approach to organizational problems became more sophisticated. He realized the importance of winning over converts among the influential oppositionally inclined workers, the so-called "advanced" workers, who refrained from participating in party activities because of questions of tactics and the dominance of the intelligentsia in party organizations. Such workers enjoyed a considerable reputation and inspired trust among their fellow workers. Professor V. V. Sviatlovskii, an early participant in Social Democratic circles who knew many such workers personally, wrote:

These so-called "eagles," i.e. individuals not satisfied with the party, but more or less conscious former members of the party, always represented a considerable and influential group among the proletariat of St. Petersburg. Their common characteristic was hostility toward the intelligentsia, and each in particular was characterized by his individuality and strong will.<sup>39</sup>

Both Aleksei Karelin and his wife Vera enjoyed a reputation as "eagles" of unquestioned integrity and honesty. The alignment of their political attitudes with the opposition and their devotion to the cause of workers were well known, and Gapon was particularly anxious to win their support. He went to considerable lengths to attract them into the Assembly. Aleksei hesitated. In his own words:

We knew that Gapon had some ties with the police and we were careful. I was a Bolshevik . . . had extensive

<sup>39</sup> Sviatlovskii, p. 90.

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connections among workers and with the intelligentsia. . . . And these old ties somehow kept me from trusting Gapon. . . . We became acquainted with Gapon, but just could not believe that anything good for the workers would come from this acquaintance.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, the couple began to take an active part in discussions with Gapon, and they were joined by a number of workers with similar backgrounds. Many of the future leaders of the Assembly emerged from this group, among them Dmitrii V. Kuzin, a professed Menshevik who later served as secretary to the Assembly and unofficial personal secretary to Gapon.

This group of politically experienced workers immediately lent a new direction to discussions in the Assembly. At first the newcomers were very skeptical, constantly challenging the views of the Gaponovites. Their knowledge of the problems to be faced and their experience in the opposition movement gave them an advantage over the less seasoned circle members. Their critical, questioning attitude impressed the circle as evidence of conflicting views, and therefore the newcomers were half-seriously designated the "opposition." But the weekly circle meetings, which took the form of a serious course of study with members preparing specific assignments to be discussed and presented before the general open meetings on Sundays and Wednesdays, were a genuine exchange where the Gaponovites and the "opposition" criticized, encouraged, and influenced each other.

Following the Saturday evening meetings of the circle, about a dozen of Gapon's assistants regularly gathered in his apartment for talks which frequently lasted all night. Father Gapon generally enjoyed arguing with workers and never missed an opportunity to engage in a heated discussion. "If Gapon had some free time and met two or three people who interested him . . . he would drag them to his

<sup>40</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 109.

apartment to drink tea."<sup>41</sup> Gapon acquired the habit of chain smoking—a trait most uncommon among the Russian clergy. He was also fond of beer and liked to carry on arguments enveloped in clouds of smoke and with a glass of beer in one hand.<sup>42</sup> Varnashev left a vivid description of these Saturday-night gatherings:

Two small, hot, stuffy, smoke-filled rooms were crowded with people. Some drank tea, others got a bite to eat, but the majority immediately became involved in arguments, with Gapon inevitably in the middle. The subjects of debate usually concerned workers' organizations and the opportunities they presented; however, it would be more correct to say that there were no definite topics for these discussions. Now there would be an argument on a scientific subject, then it would shift to some aspects of revolutionary history, and then gradually shift to the teaching of Christ in the general scheme of progress, until all voices would be drowned out by the powerful baritone of Pavlov singing an aria from "The Demon."<sup>43</sup>

The difference between the approaches of Zubatov and Gapon became increasingly evident as Gapon's organization evolved. Zubatov always looked at labor problems from the point of view of national security. What happened in the labor organizations themselves was secondary to the interests of the state, and Zubatov did not let internal de-

<sup>41</sup> Varnashev, p. 197.

<sup>42</sup> Pavlov, p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> Varnashev, p. 197. Gapon, in *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 64, wrote: "The best day was Saturday when members of the secret committee and several loyal people would gather in my apartment to talk about our common cause." See also Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," pp. 109-110; and Pavlov, pp. 37-38. Pavlov was a choir director in charge of entertainment at the clubhouse. The opera "Demon," by Anton Rubinstein, based on a poem by M. Lermontov, was a favorite with singers at that time.

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velopments within his organizations influence his decisions. Father Gapon, on the other hand, began with similar aims and purposes, but he approached the whole undertaking from the opposite side. To him the organizations and the workers within were primary, and the benefits to be gained for the workers took precedence over other considerations. Whatever happened within the Assembly had a direct impact on his views, which constantly changed and developed as the organization grew.

Gapon was not a person of moderation; whatever he did was done passionately, and the Assembly became his personal crusade. His plans were ambitious. From discussions with workers, the Saturday gatherings with his assistants, and extensive reading, he gradually acquired a perspective on the aims of the labor movement far broader than that outlined in the statutes. Like Zubatov, Gapon and his followers assumed that labor organizations were a means to hasten the emergence of the proletariat as a dominant social force. But whereas Zubatov assumed that the proletariat had to grow into its dominant role under strict state supervision, Gapon considered state supervision an enforced condition, not a first principle. He worked with the officials when necessary, but he was not adverse to working around them also. Gradually he realized that the original goals defined in the statutes were too limited to appeal to any but the most conservative elements among the workers. Furthermore, the more progressive workers were still suspicious of Gapon's previous connections with the police. They openly criticized the professed goals and policies of the Assembly. In order to win the support of advanced workers like the Karelin, a more radical set of goals was essential.

In early March 1904, Gapon gathered four carefully selected members of the inner circle in his apartment—Varnashev, Vasil'ev, Karelin, and Kuzin. Swearing them to secrecy, Gapon told them that his real purpose in forming the Assembly had been to gain concrete improvements for the lower classes. He then showed them a program outlining, in three sections, the results he hoped to achieve:

- I. MEASURES TO ELIMINATE IGNORANCE OF, AND ARBITRARINESS TOWARD, THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE:
  1. Freedom and inviolability of person; freedom of speech, press, assembly, and freedom of conscience in matters of worship.
  2. Universal and compulsory education, financed by the state.
  3. Responsibility of the ministers before the people and guarantees that the government will abide by law.
  4. Equality of all before the law without exceptions.
  5. Immediate pardon of those who suffered for their convictions.
- II. MEASURES TO ELIMINATE THE POVERTY OF THE PEOPLE:
  1. Abolition of indirect taxation and the introduction of direct, progressive, and income, taxes.
  2. Abolition of the land redemption tax, [establishment of] cheap credit, and the gradual transfer of land to the people.
- III. MEASURES TO ELIMINATE THE OPPRESSION OF LABOR BY CAPITAL:
  1. Protection of labor by law.
  2. Freedom of cooperative associations and professional labor unions.
  3. An eight-hour work day and regulation of overtime work.
  4. Freedom of struggle for labor against capital.
  5. Participation of representatives of the working class in drafting of legislation for the state insurance of workers.
  6. Normal wages [minimum wage].<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Varnashev, p. 198; Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 107. Varnashev, Karelin, and a number of Gapon's lieutenants maintained that the program presented by Gapon that day was included in its entirety in the first version of the January 9 petition. See Karelin,

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These proposals were a compilation of general demands frequently expressed in strike leaflets, socialist literature, and other oppositional publications. Most of the demands related to economic issues and free trade-union activity. The political demands were much weaker, calling only for primary civil rights and the responsibility of officials. The basic restructuring of state power that would be required to fulfill even these minimal political demands was not considered.

Gapon found a ready and enthusiastic response among his listeners. He apparently expressed views they all shared, and very probably his program was composed of ideas and suggestions brought up by the group at their gatherings.<sup>45</sup> Gapon explained that his proposals were a secret program to guide the leadership of the Assembly. "Spread these thoughts," he told them, "strive for the fulfillment of these demands, but do not say where they came from."<sup>46</sup> When asked how he proposed to accomplish his goals, Gapon explained that his contacts with the officials were necessary means and that he intended to build up the Assembly until it became a force to be reckoned with: "If we form such clubs as we have in St. Petersburg in Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, Rostov-on-Don, and Ivanovo, then gradually we will cover all of Russia with a network. We will unite all the workers in Russia. There might be a crisis, general or economic, and then we will put forth our political demands."<sup>47</sup>

The proposals had the desired effect on the conferees, breaking down the last barriers of distrust among them. Karelin recalled, "We were stunned. . . . We all saw that Gapon had written more comprehensively than the Social

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"Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 107, and Varnashev, p. 198. See also two accounts based on interviews with the participants: Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii' 9 ianvaria 1905 goda," pp. 20-21; and Sviatlovskii, pp. 90-91.

<sup>45</sup> Varnashev, p. 198.

<sup>46</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 107.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107. Similar views were expressed by Gapon in Pavlov, pp. 34, 38-39.

Democrats. We then realized that Gapon was an honest man, and we believed him."<sup>48</sup> The assembled workers agreed to dedicate themselves to the fulfillment of Gapon's proposals, which became known among them as the "Program-of-the-Five." They swore an oath not to reveal the source of the secret program on pain of death.<sup>49</sup> This dramatic meeting was a crucial turning point in the development of the Assembly. Gapon gained the support of the key members who were to become his closest collaborators, his personal staff. Karelin and his group gave the Assembly an undeniable stamp of respectability among workers dedicated to the labor movement and opened the way for attracting many who had previously avoided the clubhouse. From then on, Varnashev commented, the clubhouse "brimmed with life" (*zhizn' zabila kliuchem*).<sup>50</sup> Sympathetic laymen offered to arrange lectures for the clubhouse; meetings became more lively; the scope of discussions broadened. In the gatherings of the leadership, debate centered around the "Program-of-the-Five."

Having consolidated his support within the leadership, Gapon prepared for the official opening ceremony of the Assembly on April 11, 1904. Failing to obtain permission for Bishop Sergii to officiate at the opening, Father Gapon conducted the proceedings himself. After the prayer, several workers addressed the gathering. Gapon also spoke to the audience, rejoicing that for the first time in Russian history statutes had been approved permitting an independent association of workers where "everything is based on trust and honest service to the workers' interests. The initial progress of the Assembly gives every reason to believe that the workers will justify this trust."<sup>51</sup> Factory inspector Litvinov-Falinskii spoke on behalf of his colleagues, expressing their sympathy with the strivings of the workers. The assem-

<sup>48</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> Varnashev, p. 198.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198; also see Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> Excerpts from *Peterburgskaia gazeta*, April 14, 1904, in Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, note 72, p. 147.

bled crowd, numbering about 150, unanimously accepted a proposal to send a telegram to the minister of the interior with a request "to lay at the feet of His Imperial Majesty, the adored Monarch, a most loyal expression of the workers, inspired by their zealous love for the Throne and the Fatherland." With great enthusiasm the audience thrice sang "God Save the Tsar" and shouted "Hurrah!" The evening concluded with entertainment and dancing.<sup>52</sup>

The official opening of the Assembly stimulated considerable interest among the workers and attracted new members. Gapon recounted that on the opening day 73 new members joined the organization.<sup>53</sup> According to the treasurer's report, as of May 1, 1904, the Assembly had 170 dues-paying members. In addition, a large number of monthly permits, the principal means by which workers participated in the activities of the Assembly, were sold.<sup>54</sup> The responsible circle elected a governing board, which in turn elected the officers of the Assembly. Vasil'ev became the president, Karelin treasurer, and Kuzin secretary. Although the statutes explicitly excluded women from elections to the governing board, Vera Karelina was co-opted onto the board, where she exercised considerable influence.<sup>55</sup>

Vera Karelina was a remarkable woman whose involvement contributed immeasurably to the success of the Assembly. She began organizing women, and Gapon encouraged and supported her effort from the very start. A tireless and dedicated worker, she established an organization of women within the Assembly with planned courses of study, meetings, and activities. By the end of 1904, approximately a thousand women were involved on a regular basis.<sup>56</sup> One acquaintance related:

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> Svatlovskii, pp. 78-79.

<sup>55</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> Ainzaf, *Zubatovshchina i gaponovshchina*, p. 130.



Vera Markovna gave her whole heart to this organization and enthusiastically told me about the progress of enlightenment among the workers, the growth of consciousness among them, the development of their organization and unity. She expected the workers' clubs to accomplish all this, and she was not the only one to be inspired by such hopes—many workers shared her enthusiasm.<sup>57</sup>

Like her husband, she distrusted Gapon at first, but came to trust him implicitly. "She believed in him as a preordained fate," commented one who knew her.<sup>58</sup> She enjoyed great prestige among Gapon's assistants, and Pavlov even considered her influence not less and perhaps even greater than that of Gapon, but her unwavering support for the priest helped smooth over many a quarrel between Gapon and his assistants.<sup>59</sup>

Several outsiders also contributed to activities in the clubhouse. Pavlov, the friend of the Karelins who liked to sing operatic arias late at night, organized a choir and at first was responsible for entertainment in the clubhouse. This function was later taken over by a well-known impresario, the owner of several entertainment enterprises in St. Petersburg, Vera A. Kolyshko, better known as Mme. Nemetti. She was able to attract well-known artists for performances at the clubhouse, and together Pavlov and Mme. Nemetti arranged over forty performances during 1904.<sup>60</sup>

Other important activities in the Assembly, among them lectures and study groups, obtained some modest support from outside. Regular lectures were organized by F. A. Malinin, editor of *The Jail Courier* (*Tiuremnyi vestnik*), who himself lectured on the history of Russian literature.

<sup>57</sup> Vengerova in Ts. Zelikson-Bobrovskaiia, ed., *Pervaiia russkaia revoliutsiia v Peterburge 1905 g.*, vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>58</sup> Pavlov, p. 52.

<sup>59</sup> See discussion of her role in the organization in *ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56, see also pp. 35-37.

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A geologist, Preobrazhenskii, conducted lectures on physical sciences, and according to Karelin his talks were very beneficial because workers "did not know of what the earth was made nor whence the world came; the lecturer explained all that and provided the answers."<sup>61</sup> A retired artillery colonel, I. Korotkov, was especially popular for his renditions at the public readings he organized. Workers were encouraged to participate in these activities, and occasionally some even read their own poetry.<sup>62</sup> A journalist and newspaper editor, N. Stroev (pen name of S. Ia. Stechkin), discussed current events.<sup>63</sup> At the end of the summer a Jewish lawyer with moderate Social Democratic leanings, I. M. Finkel', lectured on legal topics and provided legal advice to workers.<sup>64</sup> A merchant, A. E. Mikhailov, offered to provide capital for the establishment of a workshop and a co-operative store with profits going to the Assembly.<sup>65</sup>

The demand for these activities was overwhelming, and workers enthusiastically became involved in almost anything offered them.<sup>66</sup> The clubhouse was filled during its open hours. On Sundays workers would arrive with their entire families and spend the day in discussions, lectures, and study groups, not returning home until the evening's entertainment was concluded. Because outside support was insufficient to meet the growing demands on the Assembly, the leadership had to rely mainly on their own resources. The "Saturdays" grew in size until by the end of 1904 between sixty and seventy selected workers were conducting an organized course of study. These sessions began with simple problems and gradually became more sophisticated,

<sup>61</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 109. See also Varnashev, p. 200.

<sup>62</sup> Varnashev, p. 200. For a sample of poems written by workers, see Mitel'man, *et al.*, *Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda, 1801-1917*, p. 172.

<sup>63</sup> Sviatlovskii, p. 80.

<sup>64</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 109, incorrectly calls him "Finkel'shtein." For a short biographical note on Finkel', see Kolo-kol'nikov and Rapaport, *1905-1907 gg. v professional'nom dvizhenii*, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Varnashev, p. 198.

<sup>66</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 109.

touching upon such complicated topics as an analysis of the constitutions of West European states, labor and cooperative movements abroad and in Russia, the Russian revolutionary movement and revolutionary literature.<sup>67</sup> In the Saturday discussions new cadres of leaders were prepared to conduct lectures at general meetings and to lead study groups. A constant flow of information from the membership upward allowed the leaders to respond to the interests of the workers quickly and created a sense of unity within the ranks.

The police authorities were elated by the progress of Gapon and the Assembly. What they observed in the clubhouse gave them no reason to regret their initial support of the venture. As word about the clubhouse spread through the working-class districts of St. Petersburg, it became evident that the single clubhouse located in the Vyborg district was too small and too far away from the populous working-class suburbs across town where the larger industrial plants were located. Some who managed to attend meetings despite the distance expressed interest in establishing similar clubhouses in their own sections of the city. Gapon's plans anticipated the need for expansion, and in May he sent his organizers into the Narva district, one of the more populous working-class suburbs, located in the southwestern part of the city, where the largest industrial plant in Russia, the Putilov Works, was located. An Okhrana report written in early June looked favorably on the work of the Assembly and its possibilities for expansion:

Observing the activity of the "Assembly" one involuntarily begins to believe in its viability and its possibility of exerting very beneficial influence among the workers: the record of the Assembly, although a very short one, is proof of this. Even now the Assembly of Russian workers begins to emerge as a desirable

<sup>67</sup> On these Saturday-night meetings, see Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 64-65; Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," pp. 109-110; Varnashev, p. 198; and Pavlov, pp. 37-38. Also see Sviatlovskii, pp. 80-81.

social force. It is beginning to gain increasing support among honest, sensible Russian workers, as is substantiated by the incessant requests of regular members from various districts of St. Petersburg for permission to open branches in their districts since many workers cannot join the Assembly because of its distant location. Unfortunately the Assembly does not possess sufficient funds to permit initial outlays of 400 rubles to open clubrooms in this or that district of St. Petersburg. Yet the clubrooms of the Assembly are the first step in the creation of nests for the development of well-intentioned elements among the Russian workers who will strive to better their lot by legal means.<sup>68</sup>

The Okhrana administration was so well disposed to Gapon's undertakings that it even offered to subsidize them. As Gapon recalled, "About this time I was invited to the office of the Okhrana and offered a large sum of money for our society. It was very difficult for me to accept any of it, but in order to divert suspicion I accepted 400 rubles and entered them as an anonymous gift."<sup>69</sup> The exact sum allocated to Gapon was 360 rubles, of which 150 came from the funds of the Special Section of the police department and 210 from the St. Petersburg Okhrana.<sup>70</sup> The size of the subsidy was apparently based on the cost of equipping the Vyborg clubhouse, as reported by Gapon in his memorandum to the director of police.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> The report is given in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 298-299.

<sup>69</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 67.

<sup>70</sup> For the Okhrana document, see Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 298. Aside from the statement of Zubatov about his payments to Gapon, this is the only evidence of police subsidies for the Assembly found in the official documents. It is frequently asserted that the police funds were used to open other branches; see, for example, Ainzhaft, *Zubatovshchina i gaponovshchina*, p. 133, and Schwarz, p. 271. Gapon and his assistants insist that this was not the case.

<sup>71</sup> Kobiakov, p. 34.

With the aid and blessing of the authorities, Gapon proceeded to expand his organization by opening a branch in the Narva district. An old inn was rented and renovated in the vicinity of the Putilov Works. The premises were more spacious, including a hall which could accommodate over two thousand persons. The official dedication of the new clubhouse took place on May 30, 1904, and was attended by the city governor, General Fullon, who made a short speech. He spoke of the difficult war and the need for all Russia to unite to end the conflict with honor. "Strength lies in unity," he concluded.<sup>72</sup> The speech was greeted with thunderous applause, and the workers were impressed and flattered to be addressed by such a high official. Fullon left the clubhouse very pleased after donating 100 rubles to the mutual-aid fund of the Assembly. During the rest of the year he attended opening ceremonies at several branches, each time making the same speech and his usual donation. Following the departure of General Fullon, Father Gapon addressed the audience and, taking his cue from the General, spoke of unity, particularly unity among the workers. The speeches were followed by an evening of entertainment.

Thus the Assembly acquired its first branch, designated the First, or Narva, Branch, which eventually became the largest and most important branch of the organization. By the end of June the Narva Branch had close to seven hundred members. It became Gapon's base of operations and the center of his interest. In his autobiography Gapon stated that he even gave up his position in the Assembly to become chairman of the Narva Branch.<sup>73</sup> The statement had no basis in fact, but reflected his partiality for the Narva organization.

Concurrently efforts were made to establish a branch in the district of Basil Island (*Vasilii ostrov*) in the north-

<sup>72</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 67. The Narva Branch was located at No. 42 Petergofskoe Chaussée in the building formerly occupied by an inn, the "Staryi Tashkent." There is an interesting, although somewhat fictionalized, account of the opening of the branch in Mitel'man, pp. 169ff.

<sup>73</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 66.

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western section of the city where Karelin had excellent connections among the workers and could expect to draw many of them into a new branch.<sup>74</sup> This became the Basil Island, or Second, Branch of the Assembly. Karelin and his group assumed leadership, generally dominating the organization in the northwestern part of the city. The original clubhouse in the Vyborg district was left to the care of Varnashev. It was still usually referred to as the "Center," and at first was looked upon as the headquarters of the Assembly. Most of the leadership meetings were held there, and organizers from the Vyborg Branch were sent to establish and run new branches. In time, however, this center lost much of its significance, becoming simply another branch, the Third, or Vyborg, Branch.

To a great extent the success of the organization's expansion during 1904 resulted from the goodwill and support of General Fullon. Father Gapon was able to gain the General's complete confidence. By attending functions of the Assembly, Fullon gave it an official seal of approval. Most importantly, Gapon persuaded the city governor to promise that no one would be arrested for his activity in the Assembly, not even the revolutionaries. Gapon convinced the general that he and his assistants could handle revolutionary speakers and protect members from their corrupting influence. Arrests and restrictions on the scope of discussions in the Assembly would only destroy the trust built up among the workers. When radical speakers made their rare appearances at meetings, they were met with firm inhospitality on the part of both leaders and members.

Evidently General Fullon was satisfied, for there are no known cases of individuals arrested for activity in connection with the Assembly. Although many workers believed that arrests were made, they were hard put to name a specific example, and one investigator later observed, "Indeed,

<sup>74</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 108. Karelin wrote that the Basil Island Branch was established in May. However, since the official dedication ceremony took place on October 24, 1904, it received the designation of the "Second Branch."

policemen and plain-clothes men sometimes were present at the branches, and it is entirely possible that party members or more outspoken speakers had to account later for their fiery speeches. But such cases were, without question, an exception."<sup>75</sup> Gapon's assistants categorically insisted that during the life of the Assembly no one was arrested for speaking out in discussions. Karelin wrote, "No one was arrested; no one was caught through the Assembly during all this time, although it happened that people without party affiliation, as well as party activists who came to our meetings, spoke quite frankly and often quite sharply."<sup>76</sup> Pavlov unequivocally stated that the rumors of arrests for speeches at the branches were without foundations—"not one case, as far as I know, has ever been substantiated."<sup>77</sup>

The minutes of a regular meeting at the Narva Branch in early June give a graphic picture of the conduct of business and nature of discussions at the Assembly clubhouses. Meetings, held in the main hall with its icons in the corner and portraits of Russian rulers on the walls, were opened and closed by prayers. At the meeting on June 6, 1904, the emperor's reply to a greeting sent him on the occasion of the opening of the Assembly was read. The audience enthusiastically shouted "Hurrah" three times. Gapon then solemnly informed them of the assassination of the Russian governor general, N. I. Bobrikov, by a Finnish revolutionary. Bobrikov was a detested promoter of the forceful policy of Russification in Finland, and his death evoked considerable jubilation among liberal circles, but Gapon launched into a harangue calling on his listeners to close ranks and protect themselves against the foreign enemies of Russia. The dirge "Eternal Memory" was sung for Bobrikov.

Gapon next discussed an outline of the history of labor relations, explaining that industrial progress had an adverse effect on wages, compelling workers to organize and seek

<sup>75</sup> Gurevich, *9-e ianvaria: Po dannym "anketnoi komissii,"* p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 108.

<sup>77</sup> Pavlov, pp. 40-41, and particularly the note on p. 41. See also Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 65.

redress of their grievances. Enumerating several approaches to labor organization, Gapon noted that the English "individualistic" approach, according to which workers organized themselves independently, caused great hardships since the unions were unable to achieve significant results without the aid of the government. The Russian policy of trying to solve labor problems by promoting workers' aspirations from above exclusively through government channels also failed to justify itself. In contrast he pointed to Germany, where workers were granted an opportunity to provide for their own development and security "through their own efforts in cooperation with, and guided by, the government."<sup>78</sup> Such a model policy, Gapon concluded, had already shown positive results.

These views were characteristic of the attitudes propagated in the Assembly: loyalty to the sovereign, crude anti-revolutionary chauvinism, and faith in the possibility of evolving an independent labor movement in cooperation with the regime. Little wonder that the officials of the ministry of the interior did not regard such propaganda as harmful, especially as it helped to draw workers away from the revolutionaries. They did not realize that Gapon's insistence on independence, despite the necessity for cooperation with the authorities, fostered a self-confident, even arrogant, attitude in the minds of the workers which sooner or later was bound to be expressed in overt action. Nor were the officials aware of the serious challenge contained in the secret Program-of-the-Five. Concealing his final aims from the authorities while actively propagating them among his supporters, Gapon was setting his organization on a collision course with the whole structure of imperial Russia.

By late June of 1904, Gapon decided the time had come to establish organizations patterned on the Assembly in other cities of Russia, a decision that almost proved his un-

<sup>78</sup> See minutes of the meeting of June 6, 1904, in editorial notes to Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 150-151.



doing. Gapon intended to visit his home in the Ukraine by way of several cities—Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, and Poltava—where he would try to interest workers and officials in setting up branches of the organization. The city governor's office, apparently informed of his intentions, warned Gapon not to get involved in Moscow affairs.<sup>79</sup> Ignoring the warning, Gapon spent three days in Moscow (June 19-22) visiting some influential conservative publicists, among them the editor, V. A. Gringmut,<sup>80</sup> and the Zubatovite organizations, where he spoke glowingly of developments in St. Petersburg and advised workers to abandon their ties with the police in favor of an independent organization modeled on the Assembly. He even offered to help them write new statutes and promised his assistance in getting the statutes approved by the ministry of the interior. Gapon openly attacked the Zubatovite leaders in Moscow, accused them of being police agents, and suggested they be immediately expelled. When the Moscow authorities got wind of the out-of-town priest's meddling in the affairs of their local organizations, they were incensed.<sup>81</sup>

While Gapon continued on his trip visiting other cities, Grand Duke Sergei, governor general of Moscow and a favorite uncle of the emperor, sent Plehve a strongly worded report. Describing Gapon's activities in Moscow, the governor general was indignant at Gapon's audaciously interfering in local affairs without consulting the proper authorities. The grand duke considered Gapon's preemptory behavior "very dangerous," and requested that the minis-

<sup>79</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moi zhizni*, p. 68.

<sup>80</sup> General Skandrakov encouraged Gapon to visit Moscow. Gringmut was left unimpressed, and even somewhat disturbed. He relayed his impressions of Gapon to another arch-conservative publicist, a former member of the terrorist organization *Narodnaia volia*, Lev Tikhomirov, saying that he thought that Gapon "is on the payroll of the Okhrana, but at the same time he is a revolutionary." See Tikhomirov, "25 let nazad. (Iz dnevnika L. Tikhomirova)," *KA*, no. 1, p. 56; also Gapon, *Istoriia moi zhizni*, p. 68.

<sup>81</sup> According to General Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 186, Gapon was arrested and then expelled from Moscow.

ter of the interior inform him of action he intended to take in this matter.<sup>82</sup> Plehve had no desire to antagonize Grand Duke Sergei, and his previous experience with the Zubatovite workers' organizations had made him very leery of the whole business. On the tenth of July he instructed General Fullon to tell Gapon in no uncertain terms that he must cease his agitation among the workers or lose his position and face administrative punishment.<sup>83</sup> Two days later, in a discussion with the noted statistician A. Pogozhev, Plehve brought up the subject of police-sponsored trade unions. When Pogozhev criticized the organizations, Plehve agreed. "Yes, you are right," he sighed, "I myself now see that it was premature to develop such a movement among the Russian workers."<sup>84</sup>

Unaware of the reaction in Moscow, Gapon stopped in several other cities, but with few results. His effort to establish an organization in Kiev was described by the head of the Kiev Okhrana section, Colonel Spiridovich, an old associate of Zubatov whom Gapon knew from St. Petersburg.<sup>85</sup> The governor general of Kiev was another familiar figure, General Kleigels. Gapon went directly to Spiridovich, and they met like old friends. The priest related the success of his undertaking in St. Petersburg in great detail and then informed the colonel that the director of police, Lopukhin, had authorized him to establish a similar organization in Kiev. Spiridovich was less than enthusiastic about Gapon's proposals, arguing that Kiev presented a different situation; the revolutionary parties were much stronger there, and the establishment of a labor organization had to wait until the revolutionary movement was under control.

Knowing that Kleigels' permission would be required, Spiridovich rushed to the governor general's office with most emphatic objections to Gapon's plans. Even Kleigels'

<sup>82</sup> The letter of July 6, 1904, marked "completely secret," is published in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 300-301.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, note on p. 300.

<sup>84</sup> A. Pogozhev, "Iz vospominanii o V. K. fon-Pleve," p. 267.

<sup>85</sup> This episode is described by Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," pp. 186-187.

assurances that he had no intention of allowing Gapon to operate in Kiev failed to mollify Spiridovich, who feared Kleigels might relent under the persuasive influence of his former protégé from St. Petersburg. Since Spiridovich was also worried that he might be acting contrary to the instructions of his superiors in St. Petersburg, he decided to leave immediately for the capital and present his case in person. Lopukhin, pleased with Spiridovich's diligence, "expressed his indignation over the impudence of Gapon" and pulled out the priest's dossier, revealing the letter from the grand duke and Plehve's resolution. On parting, Lopukhin assured Spiridovich that his reaction had been correct.<sup>86</sup>

From the incidents in Moscow and Kiev we may conclude that Gapon intended to develop an independent, legal labor organization on a national scale. His actions showed that he was not a simple tool of the police, as many claimed. The course he pursued clearly surpassed the limits allowed him by the authorities. He was threading a thin line through the ranks of officialdom. His behavior in Moscow and his attempt to deceive the provincial Okhrana were crude and insolent ruses. Gapon was fond of implying that he had the support of important officials, dropping impressive names when it served his purposes, but this gambit was bound to backfire on him. In Moscow and Kiev his indiscretions exposed him to administrative sanctions, and it seemed the end of his career as a labor leader was not far off.

Only the sudden death of Plehve on July 15, 1904, another victim of a terrorist bomb, saved Gapon. The assassination of Plehve coincided with a period of rising social discontent and severe military reverses in the Far East. The public greeted the news of his death with unconcealed joy, and even government officials, while deploring his violent

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187. Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 69, described his trip to Ukraine and his organizational efforts as taking place during the summer. Spiridovich, however, thought that his meeting with Gapon in Kiev took place in the winter. Gapon's version is probably correct, since his trip home during the summer is documented but there is no evidence that he was absent from St. Petersburg during the winter.

end, welcomed the opportunity to alter his repressive policies.

Six weeks elapsed before Plehve's successor was appointed. The choice fell on Prince Petr D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, formerly a high official in the ministry of the interior. A graduate of the Corps of Pages, an officer of the Guard and a veteran of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, Sviatopolk-Mirskii left his post as director of the police department in 1902 because he could not support the reactionary policies of Plehve. Appointed governor general of the Vilna military district, he earned a reputation for moderation in dealing with the local population of Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews, traditionally at odds with Russian administrations. The new minister of the interior was a mild-mannered man; as one high official observed, "His outstanding trait was a desire to remain at peace with everyone and live in an atmosphere of friendship."<sup>87</sup> Sviatopolk-Mirskii proclaimed a new political course—a rapprochement between the government and society. This was to be an era of mutual trust, a thaw in relations between the regime and the people, a "spring," as it was quickly named.

In the six weeks of confusion following Plehve's death, the immediate concern over Gapon and his Assembly was eclipsed by long-range, complicated decisions on national policy. The new policy generated an ever increasing tempo of political activity in all segments of Russian society. The atmosphere of relative political freedom stimulated rising expectations of reforms. Such a climate made it difficult, if not impossible, for the authorities to take repressive measures against Gapon and the Assembly. The Assembly leadership was free to pursue its purposes more openly and attract wider support among the masses without fear of immediate repression. The death of Plehve thus created highly favorable conditions for the Assembly's purposes. In early 1904 its goals had seemed to be part of a utopian revolutionary program, but by the fall of that year it was conceivable that they could be peacefully realized.

<sup>87</sup> Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past*, p. 294.

## “The Spring”: *The Ministry of Sviatopolk-Mirskii*

No one can even imagine what will become of our “Workers’ Union.” In two to three years all two hundred thousand workers of St. Petersburg will be members of our union. And the provinces? We will spread our activity throughout all of Russia: all industrial centers, even the most remote corners will be drawn into the “Union.” We will cover the whole of Russia with a network of our organizations; this will become a colossal organization the likes of which has not been seen by the world yet . . . we will have such power that everyone will have to obey the worker and the toiling people, and then. . . .

Gapon (1904)

The appointment of Sviatopolk-Mirskii ushered in an era of mutual trust. His tenure was characterized by considerable confusion and indecision as the government sought to adjust to the unfamiliar role of being responsive to public opinion. The government tried to pacify the public with promises of changes, but these promises aroused greater expectations than official policy warranted. Sviatopolk-Mirskii envisaged some moderate changes in the political structure, no more than would satisfy the more conservative elements among the liberals. The tone of public discussions during the “spring” was considerably more radical than that intended by the government. Newspapers appeared on the stands with mastheads proudly announcing that they were no longer subject to preliminary censorship. Meetings, gatherings of every possible description, and particularly banquets turned into political demonstrations where speakers called for drastic political reforms.

By the summer of 1904 the Assembly had completed its formative stage and was prepared to expand. Three

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branches were in operation, and new members were constantly joining the organization. One observer remarked, "By this time it was becoming clear that the Assembly had developed deep roots in the preceding period, and now new shoots were sprouting up even where not expected."<sup>1</sup> The organization's success was tempered by growing pains, particularly during Gapon's absence from St. Petersburg. The stability of the Assembly depended on the personality of Gapon; with his absence, conflicts quickly developed among his assistants. Gapon heard of Plehve's death while at home in the Ukraine. Eager to take advantage of the new political course, he borrowed 750 rubles from his father (who mortgaged the family house and land for this purpose) and, cutting short his visit, returned to St. Petersburg.<sup>2</sup>

Back in the capital Gapon took immediate steps to consolidate the gains made by the Assembly and ensure its future growth. The first general meeting of the entire membership was called on September 19, 1904. A large auditorium was rented in a better section of the city for this elaborate affair. The meeting, which was briefly visited by General Fullon, attracted an overflow crowd of more than fifteen hundred people. It was opened by a religious service and the singing of the national anthem. The Assembly's leaders were especially scrupulous in dealing with finances. They presented a series of financial reports and placed open account books on the table to be freely examined by members.<sup>3</sup> After the speeches and reports, Father Gapon introduced the question of the establishment of new branches. The statutes of the Assembly had deliberately been left ambiguous on this point; consequently, the decision taken at the general meeting would provide the basis for further expansion. There was unanimous support for Gapon's proposal for the organization of new branches, and

<sup>1</sup> Pavlov, "Iz vospominanii o rabochem soiuze," p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70. Gapon erroneously placed the meeting on August 9. See also Pavlov, pp. 49-50.

additional payments were voted of ten kopecks monthly from members of the first category and five kopecks from members of the second to help defray publicity and administrative costs. New officers were elected, including Vasil'ev and Kuzin, who were nominated by Gapon and unanimously approved as chairman and secretary of the governing board. The general meeting, lasting from noon to four o'clock, concluded with the singing of the national anthem and a “thunderous, prolonged and uninterrupted cheer for the development and success of the Assembly.”<sup>4</sup> In the evening, over two thousand spectators jammed the five-hundred-seat hall for an entertainment program organized for workers and their families. Most were content to remain standing throughout the performance. The manager of the hall, who was not used to such crowds, was pleasantly surprised and remarked that he had never seen a larger and better behaved audience in his hall.<sup>5</sup>

This meeting summed up what had been accomplished and made provisions for the future growth of the Assembly. Noting its businesslike character, one observer commented, “. . . all activity, past as well as that planned for the future, was approved, various elections were conducted, and all this was accomplished with surprising harmony, order, and conscientiousness.”<sup>6</sup> The brief visit of the city governor signaled the rehabilitation of Gapon after the Moscow incident. In addition, General Fullon's visit seemingly gave official sanction to the important plans for future expansion approved at the meeting. Following the decision taken at the general meeting, an organizational drive quickly expanded the membership rolls and the number of branches. According to Gapon, nine branches with five thousand members were in operation in October, and twenty-five hundred new members were added during the next month. By the end of the year the Assembly had ten branches in the city proper, two outside of the city, one in the industrial village of Kol-

<sup>4</sup> The minutes of the meeting are given in editorial note no. 83 in Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>5</sup> Pavlov, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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pino, and another in the process of organization in Sestroretsk.<sup>7</sup> General Fullon consistently supported the Assembly and attended several official branch openings. After his visits, local police tended to leave the branches in peace.

In the three months following the general meeting, the Assembly was well on its way toward becoming a mass labor organization. But the flow of new blood into the leadership, previously so closely knit, was bound to produce rifts and divisions. The expansion drive made inroads into the backward masses of unskilled workers, who were more conservative and less concerned with politics. Their presence threatened to force the Assembly away from the more radical aspirations of some of its leaders. The increased membership with its conservative bent enhanced the position of Father Gapon, who was enjoying great popularity among the workers. The leadership in the branches diluted the former influence of the "staff" on Gapon. In many subtle ways his position as a charismatic leader continued to develop, and he was by now in a position to act on his own authority.

Father Gapon saw to it that his closest adherents held the highest offices in the Assembly, and he hand-picked the leadership of the new branches. When an important branch was opened in the heavily industrialized Neva district, Gapon nominated his new-found protégé, worker Nikolai Petrov, to direct it. Among his assistants, Gapon was even called the "dictator," and he appeared to enjoy his role. The success of the Assembly cultivated an arrogant attitude among its members, and its leaders were often given titles

<sup>7</sup> The branches were first established as clubhouses. When all preparations were made, they were officially opened and given a numerical designation. Thus the Neva district branch was the fourth one to be established, but the seventh to be officially opened, and therefore was so designated. The branches were usually called by their districts. Shilov, in an editorial note to Gapon (*Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 153-154), gives the following sequence in which the branches were established (1) Vyborg, (2) Narva, (3) Basil Island, (4) Neva, (5) beyond the Moscow Gates, (6) Kolomna, (7) Petersburg, (8) Port (Gavan'), (9) Rozhdestvenskii, (10) Kolpino, (11) on the Obvodnyi Canal (Narva district). The twelfth was being organized in Sestroretsk.



of authority: Varnashev became known as the “viceroy,” Karelin as the “minister of finance,” Vasil’ev and Kuzin as the “ministers of the interior”—Plehve and Sviatopolk-Mirskii, respectively. When Petrov became active among the staff members, Gapon patted him on the back and said, “Well, you can be my Alekseev,” referring to Admiral E. I. Alekseev, the viceroy of the Far East.<sup>8</sup>

Distinct groupings began to emerge within the expanded leadership. Most of the important officers were firmly behind Gapon. This group, including Vasil’ev, Varnashev, Petrov and others, had generally similar backgrounds of involvement in the labor movement, i.e. they came to the Assembly through Zubatovite organizations. Another more conservative group was somewhat uneasy about political matters and objected to contacts with the opposition intelligentsia. This attitude was most evident in the newer branches, particularly in the Narva Branch. The former “opposition” workers with previous Social Democratic ties, who were usually identified with Karelin, dominated the Basil Island district branches. Drawing strength from ideologically more advanced printers, this group was concerned lest the Assembly forsake the more radical course. Its adherents even began to meet secretly to discuss ways in which they could exert greater influence on the Assembly’s affairs.<sup>9</sup>

Although the dominant role in the radicalization of the Assembly has been attributed to Karelin and his group, these workers with former Social Democratic ties were only partly responsible.<sup>10</sup> They provided a reservoir of ideas drawn from socialist, labor, and opposition movements in Russia and abroad. In this respect, they helped to propa-

<sup>8</sup> Petrov, “Zapiski o Gapon,” p. 37, and Varnashev, “Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei,” p. 198.

<sup>9</sup> Zelikson-Bobrovskaiia, *Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia v Peterburge 1905 g.*, pp. 137ff. Almost all short biographies included in this collection mention such meetings.

<sup>10</sup> Pavlov, pp. 41 and 54, wrote that Karelin and his group opposed Gapon and practically controlled him. This is not supported by other sources, least of all by the recollections of Karelin himself.

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gandize their fellow workers, but in translating these ideas into action they tended toward caution and deliberateness, as well as toward a degree of political sophistication and consistency in their responses. They felt uneasy with excessive militancy, bold, daring and often rash activism. In contrast and paradoxically, Gapon and his politically less sophisticated adherents were prone to resort to defiance in the face of confrontation. During the last few months of 1904 Gapon and his organization successfully propagandized the workers of St. Petersburg by means of a few simple ideas concentrating on the current misery in the workers' lives and a promise of improvement. The propaganda was simple but effective. Perceived in their simplicity by the politically more backward elements among the workers, the ideas promoted came to be accepted as an article of faith and a matter of principle. Confronted by a challenge to these aspirations and lacking the flexibility that would have come from greater political sophistication, the newly won recruits tended to react in the only way they could by simply taking a stand in defense of their new-found beliefs. When a confrontation did ensue, Gapon, backed by the more naive elements in the Assembly, showed a greater disposition to resolute militancy than the politically more radical "opposition."

Despite a divergence of opinions, the leadership of the Assembly functioned in most cases with unity. Gapon successfully held everybody together by means of the endless discussions in his apartment. He brought complete strangers to these discussions, frequently involving them in various confidential matters and entrusting them with important tasks. This preferential treatment occasionally aroused resentment among his assistants, but did not destroy the close relationship between Gapon and his followers. A common sense of identification with the Assembly and the working classes, coupled with a hostile and suspicious attitude toward the outside world, held the leadership together. For example, during the initial efforts to organize, Gapon and his group met with considerable animosity from the edu-

cated public, particularly the opposition intelligentsia. The staff responded by voting down a proposal to allow student participation in some activities. Gapon thanked the workers, saying that had they voted to admit students, he would not have approved their decision.<sup>11</sup> Although the Assembly desperately needed outside assistance, the membership distrusted even those who wanted to help them. Outsiders, including scheduled lecturers and entertainers, were admitted to the branches only with the written permission of Gapon.<sup>12</sup> Antagonism was even more pronounced in relations with the opposition intelligentsia, which had opposed the Assembly in its early days. Proud of their success, the workers continually emphasized that the Assembly was their own creation, based on their own ideas and interests. The opposition intelligentsia, on the other hand, had little confidence in a labor organization that was led by a priest and patronized by the authorities, and which encouraged a conciliatory attitude toward the regime.

As a priest and graduate of the Theological Academy, Father Gapon might have been expected to be more comfortable with the educated classes than with the workers. But he was much more at home with the latter, fully sharing their antipathy to the intelligentsia. Gapon lacked the intellectual sophistication and the commitment to ideology that were characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia. He had no interest in theory. The well-known Social Democrat, Leo Deutsch (Lev Deich), who came to know Gapon quite well in exile, was amazed that “Gapon knew almost nothing about socialism or the revolutionary movement: his ignorance in these matters was simply astounding. I would hardly be mistaken if I were to say that, prior to his escape abroad, Gapon had not read a single book on political matters.”<sup>13</sup> When one of the Menshevik leaders in St. Petersburg met Gapon, he was also taken aback and later wrote:

<sup>11</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, “K istorii Sobraniia,” p. 316.

<sup>12</sup> Pavlov, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Deich (Deutsch), “Geroi na chas. (Iz vospominanii o Gapone),” p. 138.

His level of intellectual development was hardly above that of the more developed workers. This gave him a bond with the working masses, whose psychology permeated and even overpowered him: he understood the workers very well, just as they understood him. Even his method of expression was acquired from the workers, and, were it not for the priest's robe, that evening we would have thought him an ordinary worker.<sup>14</sup>

Politically sophisticated intelligentsia could not understand how Gapon was able to hold sway over the masses. He spoke too rapidly, stammered nervously, and often could not find the right word. He spoke with “the slight accent of a seminary student and a characteristically Ukrainian pronunciation of guttural sounds.”<sup>15</sup> He had difficulty with foreign words; for example, he would say “Asteredam” for “Amsterdam” and needed help to pronounce “constitutionalists.”<sup>16</sup> His discussions were not always logical in their development, and he often tried to win over his opponents by crude flattery.<sup>17</sup> Pavlov, who knew him quite well, thought that his speaking style bore the marks of his clerical training and made extensive use of the stock devices of religious sermons.<sup>18</sup> The qualities that made Gapon a success with the working masses were not likely to impress the more educated members of Russian society. Descriptions of him from this period are mixed. He could produce a favorable impression on people he wanted to cultivate; he could be charming and appear intelligent, but below the surface there seemed to be shallowness and lack of substance. The inconsistencies apparent in his character and outlook dumbfounded the intelligentsia; Gapon simply did not fit into the stereotyped images of a priest, a revolu-

<sup>14</sup> Somov (pseudonym of Peskin), “Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticheskogo dvizheniia,” p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Sizov, “Moi vstrechi s Georgiem Gaponom,” p. 551.

<sup>16</sup> Z., “K biografii Gapona,” p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39, and Somov, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Pavlov, p. 42.

tionary, an intellectual, or a worker. At a Bolshevik party conference, Lenin commented, ‘‘He impressed me as a person unquestionably devoted to the revolution, intelligent and full of initiative, although, unfortunately, without a consistent revolutionary outlook.’’<sup>19</sup>

It was precisely this lack of a ‘‘consistent revolutionary outlook’’ that disturbed the intelligentsia most. Gapon’s devotion to his organization was unquestionably genuine and an inspiration to his followers, but he was a practical man above all, and his pragmatism often gave his actions an appearance of rank opportunism. He quickly grasped the gist of a matter and then acted without pausing to reflect. Pavlov shrewdly observed:

There is no doubt that Gapon was intelligent. But his was not the all-embracing and penetrating mind of a philosopher. He had a keen, plastic, mobile mind capable of discerning the essence of the matter very quickly, but only guessing the particulars of ‘‘what’’ and ‘‘why,’’ and he felt no need to comprehend the ‘‘what’’ and ‘‘why.’’ He had only to determine that it was so, and that to achieve the desired results it was necessary to act in a certain way. He was agile, evasive, and sly. He grasped instinctively that if he acted in this way, the results would not be the desired ones, while if he acted in that way, then perhaps he would achieve what he wanted, or at least something close to it. It was difficult for him to occupy his mind with any particular question, and he hurried to dispose of each in one way or another. He could make any compromise in order to achieve his immediate goal, and this was his weakest point: he had no consistent outlook.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Statement of Lenin to the Third Party Congress. See Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Tretii s’ezd RSDRP, april’-mai 1905 goda: Protokoly* (hereafter cited as the *Tretii s’ezd RSDRP*), p. 379. The designation ‘‘Third’’ is retained for the sake of convenience. Strictly speaking this was not a party congress, but a conference of the Bolshevik group alone, while the Mensheviks met separately.

<sup>20</sup> Pavlov, p. 43.

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Semen Rappoport, a prominent Socialist Revolutionary who came to know Gapon well after his escape, wrote:

He was not acquainted with party programs and had little time to read, but he was able to grasp with amazing rapidity other people's thoughts and the general character of any trend. In this way . . . he was capable of creating an impression that he was *au courant* of all party programs and their differences. However, deep inside he not only did not understand them, but had no interest in these questions, which he considered superfluous and unnecessary for the Revolution.<sup>21</sup>

The workers, who understood Gapon well and trusted him, were more tolerant of his idiosyncrasies. While many of the intelligentsia who came to the aid of the Assembly left after a conflict with Gapon, the workers closest to him developed a devotion bordering on reverence. In the summer of 1905 a well-known writer and editor, V. A. Posse, tried to expose Gapon to his followers. His tales of Gapon's unconscionable behavior abroad did not have the desired effect. Relating his conversation with Vera Karelina, Posse wrote:

In vivid colors I described the unprincipled vacillations of Gapon while she calmly repeated: I know Georgii Apollonovich very well; I know, know that he gets carried away.<sup>22</sup>

Although Gapon was very eager to attract individuals capable of aiding the Assembly, he sought only those who would not try to challenge his authority. Gapon could not tolerate competition and was particularly jealous of the intelligentsia. At first those who came to give lectures or pro-

<sup>21</sup> A. S. (Semen Rappoport), “Iz zagranichnykh vstrech,” p. 192.

<sup>22</sup> Posse, *Moi zhiznennyi put'*: *Dorevoliutsionnyi period (1864-1917 gg.)*, p. 397.

vide entertainment were very moderate in their political views, but by the fall of 1904 discussions in the Assembly were more open, and moderately liberal members of the intelligentsia, like the Jewish lawyer Finkel', participated.<sup>23</sup> Several members of the press began to attend meetings and report the activities of the Assembly in their papers. Among them were N. Nasakin from the liberal paper *Rus'*, who wrote under the pseudonym of N. Simbirskii; Arkhangel'skii from *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, another paper advocating liberal reforms; and his wife who wrote under the pen name Varvara Avchinnikova. Gapon and his assistants made special efforts to gain the support of N. Stroev (pseudonym of S. Ia. Stechkin),<sup>24</sup> a well-known labor columnist for the workers' newspaper, *Russkaia gazeta*. *Russkaia gazeta*, which was fondly called *kopeika* because it cost only a kopeck, was mildly critical of the regime, but laid great hopes on the ministry of Sviatopolk-Mirskii.

Contacts between the Assembly and educated society were very limited throughout 1904. Even at the end of the year, when the Assembly was drawing larger and larger audiences and public agitation reached its peak, the number of nonworkers involved was very small. The intelligentsia as a whole, and party members in particular, avoided the Assembly. Individuals with party connections appeared at times, but only to denounce the Assembly and its leader. Many of Gapon's followers recalled that party intellectuals came to their meetings for the sole purpose of "calling us names."<sup>25</sup>

Lacking sufficient help from outside, the Assembly relied on its own resources. The study circle of discussion leaders expanded until as many as eighty individuals participated by the end of 1904.<sup>26</sup> The range of topics also broadened,

<sup>23</sup> Sviatlovskii, *Professional'noe dvizhenie v Rosii*, p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> See his police interrogation report in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 325-328. On the influence of *Russkaia gazeta*, see Gimer, "9-e ianvaria 1905 g. v S. Peterburge. Vospominaniia," p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Sviatlovskii, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Gurevich, *9-e ianvaria: Po donnym "anketnoi komissii,"* p. 3. Also Sviatlovskii, p. 81.

and illegal literature began to appear at these gatherings.<sup>27</sup> For example, a book by the populist revolutionary writer Stepniak-Kravchinskii, *Underground Russia*, was read and discussed.<sup>28</sup> But the prime source of material for discussion was the daily press. A special committee was formed to scan the newspapers and select material to be presented in the branches. The increasingly critical tone evident in press coverage of political events influenced discussions in the branches.<sup>29</sup> Articles from the legal press made the membership more sensitive to the overall political situation in Russia, the worsening military conditions in the Far East, and the intensive liberal campaign for political reforms.

Addresses and petitions from provincial landed assemblies (*zemstvos*) were widely publicized in the Russian press.<sup>30</sup> The liberal campaign culminated in a series of banquets, where political speeches were made, and the national zemstvo congress, which met in St. Petersburg, November 6-8, 1904. The congress had been sanctioned by Sviatopolk-Mirskii, but official permission was withdrawn at the last moment. Nevertheless the congress met as an unofficial gathering and passed two resolutions calling for political rights and national representation. The majority favored a popularly elected representative body with legislative functions while the minority supported a representative body with consultative functions. Sviatopolk-Mirskii accepted the resolution and expressed his agreement with the minority position. Thus the request for fundamental political reforms was recognized and sanctioned by the minister of the interior himself.

The liberal petition campaign and the climate it created gave a new direction to the activities of the Assembly. Although propaganda in the branches remained moderate and even naive in political matters, the issues raised by the opposition encouraged workers to discuss them and to think

<sup>27</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Sviatlovskii, p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81; see also Pavlov, p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> Varnashev, p. 200; Sviatlovskii, p. 84; and Gurevich, p. 4.



in terms of political reforms. Economic grievances had produced substantial dissatisfaction among the workers, and the liberal campaign encouraged them to speak out in similar fashion. Varnashev succinctly summarized the thrust of the discussions in the branches when he wrote that the workers' views centered on two main points:

First: that it was impossible to live like this any longer.  
... Second: that the workers, too, must add their voice to those of other *sosloviia* of Russia, but in such manner that the government could not suppress the workers' declaration or quietly sweep it under the rug.<sup>31</sup>

The idea of workers standing up for their rights was very appealing to the members of the Assembly. By asserting their independence, they would counter frequent accusations of subservience to the authorities. Although there was some support for the liberals among the workers, their interests were seen to be different. Workers were very class conscious and their primary interest was in preserving their unique identity as workers. They were more interested in economic issues than in the political demands of the liberals, which must have been too radical for many of them. The workers wanted to add their voice to those of other classes, but only in such a way that it would be heard as an expression of worker interests and not be lost in the chorus of the well-to-do bourgeoisie. Thus at the height of the liberal petition campaign in November, there was some talk, no doubt encouraged by those in the leadership who were more politically oriented, that workers should be heard, although no clear view on how this was to be done nor the specific demands to be advanced was yet emerging.

The matter had been widely discussed by the Assembly leadership, particularly within the inner circle of Gapon's aides. According to Gapon, he took the initiative in trying to formulate a plan of action for joining the clamor of the

<sup>31</sup> Varnashev, p. 200.

opposition movement: "I could not but feel that the time was approaching when freedom would be wrested from the hands of our oppressors, and at the same time I was very much afraid that, for lack of support from the masses, the effort might fail."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, he contacted representatives of the opposition movement to arrange a meeting in order to explore the possibilities of joint action. Those contacted were members of the liberal movement's radical wing with previous connections to the economist faction of the Social Democratic movement—E. D. Kuskova, her husband S. N. Prokopovich, the publisher-journalist V. Ia. Bogucharskii (pseudonym of Iakovlev), and several others. After some hesitation they met with Gapon, Kuzin, Karelin, Vasil'ev, and Varnashev—the secret circle responsible for the Program-of-the-Five.<sup>33</sup>

Father Gapon and his lieutenants explained that they wanted to explore the possibility of joining the liberal campaign. The liberal representatives suggested that the workers follow the example of the zemstvo petitions and draw up one of their own.<sup>34</sup> The Gaponovites replied that they needed their own special petition, and that liberal petitions were inadequate. Prokopovich then suggested that they accept the Social Democratic program, to which the Gaponovites replied that the membership of their organization would not accept such a radical program.<sup>35</sup> Then they

<sup>32</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 72; see also Svatlovskii, pp. 84-85.

<sup>33</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 110. It is interesting to note that Varnashev does not mention this meeting in his reminiscences.

<sup>34</sup> On contacts between the Liberationists and Gapon, see George Fischer, *Russian Liberalism*, pp. 180ff.; Belokonskii, "K istorii zemskogo dvizheniia v Rossii," p. 30, which contains editorial notes of V. Bogucharskii on the contacts with Gapon; and Galai, *The Liberation Movement in Russia 1900-1905*, pp. 236ff. Galai's study overestimates the direct influence of the Liberationists in persuading Gaponovites to accept liberal political demands for their own petition as does Pipes, in *Struve*.

<sup>35</sup> On this meeting, see editorial note no. 93 in Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 157, and Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii,'" p. 22. Soviet historian Pokrovskii remarked that it was the usual trick of Prokopovich to suggest the Social Democratic program to workers and

showed their guests a copy of their own Program-of-the-Five, and, according to Karelin,

The intelligentsia were very much surprised and confessed that this was even better and broader than the Social Democratic program. They could not offer anything themselves. We could not get anything from them as to what we should do and how we should act.<sup>36</sup>

The meeting ended abruptly with the gap between the workers and liberal intelligentsia still wide open. One of Gapon's aides surmised,

The speeches of the intelligentsia, like their visit, left the workers disappointed. Gapon called them “sourbellies” (*kisliatina*), and the workers decided from now on to rely strictly on their own resources without asking help from anyone.<sup>37</sup>

The failure to reach an understanding between the Gaponovites and liberal intelligentsia was not surprising, and it also underscored the deep-rooted antagonisms that existed between classes in Russia. The conferees had little to offer each other. First of all, the liberals were suspicious of the police cooperation enjoyed by Gapon and his organization. The liberal petition campaign centered on the demand for a popular representative body, precisely the point omitted from the Program-of-the-Five. While they were happy to welcome all newcomers into the ranks of the opposition, the Kuskova group was primarily interested in political issues and quickly lost interest in Gapon's list of demands. To Gapon and his assistants, open defiance of the regime meant certain retaliation by the government against the Assembly. The Gaponovites were not willing to sacrifice

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then, after criticizing some of its provisions, to end up with his own program; see Ainzhaft, *Zubatovshchina i gaponovshchina*, p. 167.

<sup>36</sup> Karelin, “Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon,” p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Sviatlovskii, pp. 84-85.

the future of their organization merely to express their support for the liberals' political program. Furthermore, they realized that such a show of support would not guarantee reciprocal assistance from the bourgeoisie for the workers' economic and social interests.

The discussions with the liberal intelligentsia convinced the Gaponovites that they had to rely exclusively on their own resources. In the days that followed, the Assembly leadership began actively publicizing its clandestine program. Discussions in the branches emphasized the necessity of presenting a list of labor demands—"our own, from the lower depths."<sup>38</sup> Having thus prepared the ground, Gapon called leaders from all the branches to a meeting in his apartment. Varnashev placed the date of this meeting on November 28, and he left a vivid description of what he called the "conspiracy to take definite action":

Thirty-five people in all gathered to accept, as it could not have been otherwise, the Program-of-the-Five (Gapon, Vasil'ev, Kuzin, Varnashev, and Karelin) as a petition or resolution supporting the intelligentsia in their demands for freedom. The measure then would be acted on by the Assembly.

Everyone present was asked to consider the seriousness of the proposed action and to weigh his strength and readiness to accept responsibility for the consequences. Those who disagreed [with the proposal] were asked to leave the meeting quietly after promising to keep silent about it. This was the exact, designated purpose of the meeting called by Gapon. I say so categorically because the author of these lines was asked by Gapon to open the meeting. "Put your thoughts, your feelings into them [your words]," he told me, and even now, after eighteen years, I can remember the expression on his face when he said that. It was the only time I ever saw Gapon unsure of himself and seeking outside aid.

<sup>38</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 110.

The meeting was heated, literally and in another sense, due to the excitement and tension of those present. Everyone stood, and still there was no room. Some stretched their necks in from next-door. The lamp burned dimly, and there was hardly enough air.

The speeches of Gapon and others, at times ceremoniously serious, then passionate to the point of despair, so possessed everyone that at first it seemed a reverse effect was achieved—some form of confusion and panic was evident in the faces and movements of all. But soon exclamations and remarks began to be heard, all echoing the same questions: “when,” “how,” and “what must be done?”

The answer to the question “how” neither Gapon nor anyone else could provide . . . but all agreed on one idea: that if the workers were to add their voice, then it should be done in such a way as to be heard not only by the government, but by all of Russia. “If one must die, then let him die with music,” as Inozemtsev, I believe, expressed it.

We parted with a decision to entrust Gapon with preparing the text of the petition and determining the method by which it was to be made public.<sup>39</sup>

Varnashev's account, while basically accurate, seems somewhat idealized. Though the leadership was ready to proclaim publicly its resolution, the precise demands to be included and the method of presenting them aroused heated debate. The opposition to announcing a workers' petition in support of the liberals' political demands was particularly strong. In an attempt to obtain a consensus, Gapon called several more meetings of branch representatives. According to the Okhrana interrogation of Vladimir

<sup>39</sup> Varnashev, pp. 201-202; Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 73.

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A. Ianov, chairman of the Narva Branch, the question of a petition was raised at a meeting on December 12. At that meeting Gapon asked the lawyer, Finkel', to speak for the proposal. After describing the political situation in Russia, Finkel' said that, with the exception of the workers, all social groups were presenting their lists of demands. If the workers did not join the protest movement, he argued, no one would remember them when concessions were won. Finkel' was told that such activity violated the Assembly's statutes and might lead to the arrest of everyone involved, particularly the leadership. He replied that arrests would only publicize the workers' cause and thus render the working class a great service.<sup>40</sup>

According to Ianov and Inozemtsev, there was considerable opposition to Finkel' among Gapon's assistants. Ianov equivocated to his interrogators, saying that the workers unanimously refused to vote for the proposals before consulting the members of their respective branches. Inozemtsev, on the other hand, conceded that the majority accepted the idea of presenting a workers' petition in principle although they could not agree on the contents of such a petition.<sup>41</sup> Although under Okhrana pressure Ianov and Inozemtsev deliberately whitewashed the Assembly leadership's position, their accounts of considerable resistance to Finkel's proposal are substantiated in descriptions of two subsequent meetings.<sup>42</sup> On December 15 Finkel' made another impassioned plea, but again failed to convince the workers that their petition "should be presented in support of other *sosloviia*. . . ."<sup>43</sup> Three days later Gapon sent out personal notes to his assistants asking them to meet once more in his apartment. Again Finkel' entreated them to join the liberal protest, and his sister urged women in particular to join, but their combined appeals only further alienated the workers. Many resented this intrusion of outsiders and were particularly incensed when Gapon allowed the visitors

<sup>40</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 314-315.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315 and 308.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

to vote on the proposal. Ianov and Inozemtsev initiated a written protest, signed by a number of officers, against allowing outsiders a vote in Assembly decisions. Gapon admitted his error, vowed it would not happen again, and promised to discuss the protest at the next meeting.<sup>44</sup>

Arguments over the content of the proposed list of workers' grievances and the method of its presentation threatened to split the Assembly leadership. Any such split among the officers would have produced an even greater rift among the membership. Although even the more conservatively inclined workers were eager to free themselves of the stigma of "Zubatovism," most were against political demonstrations in support of liberal demands. But the few who strongly favored joining the liberal campaign continually pressured Gapon to make a decision. Gapon probably favored leading the Assembly into political opposition. After all, he launched the secret Program-of-the-Five; he initiated contacts with members of the opposition intelligentsia; he tried to win the support of the membership for a petition; and he even invited a lawyer to argue his case at meetings with his assistants. Father Gapon was determined to make his organization the independent spokesman of the working class, but he knew that the workers would not approve an overtly political action if even his assistants balked.

After the last meeting, Gapon was left with the task of composing a workers' petition, distinct from the political demands of the liberals and revolutionaries, and of devising a method for making it public. He considered timing its presentation to coincide with a major military setback, but gradually settled on the anniversary of the emancipation of the peasants, February 19—a day of particular importance to the lower classes of Russia—as the appropriate occasion for an appeal to the tsar.<sup>45</sup> A mass demonstration of workers on this date would be looked upon as a patriotic act, and the authorities might respond favorably to a petition submitted under such optimal conditions. The plan's only

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>45</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 73, and note 96 on p. 158.

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drawback was the precedent of the demonstration organized by Zubatov on the same date in 1902, but this seemed a minor obstacle. Gapon was convinced that mass support was essential to the success of a workers' petition: the traditionally inclined masses, who might otherwise object to a public declaration of grievances, would willingly join a patriotic manifestation on this day.

Meanwhile, pressing matters in the Assembly occupied all the time Gapon and his assistants could spare. During the month of December, six branches were officially opened. The tenth and last branch in the city, located in the Port area (Gavan') of the Basil Island district, was dedicated on December 26, 1904, and the Kolpino Branch opened the following day. All branches offered a variety of activities. In addition to frequent lectures, discussions, and meetings, which attracted overflow audiences, entertainment programs and numerous study groups were organized. Father Gapon obtained financial support from his friend, the merchant, A. E. Mikhailov, to enable the Assembly to open a cooperative store. Characteristically, Gapon imagined this cooperative venture as a gigantic distribution center which would supply consumer goods to all the Assembly's members and, eventually, to all of St. Petersburg. With the accumulated capital he planned to export wool and cereal abroad. In addition, the purchasing arm of the cooperative would allow him to organize the peasantry along the Assembly's lines.<sup>46</sup> A warehouse was rented and purchases begun. Gapon estimated that the consumer and producer cooperative facilities set up by the end of 1904 could realize an annual profit of at least 100,000 rubles.<sup>47</sup>

Activities in the branches were beginning to involve increasing numbers of women. Despite an occasional snide remark (e.g. "long in hair, short in brain"), Father Gapon gave every encouragement to Karelina's efforts to recruit

<sup>46</sup> Petrov, pp. 41-42. Petrov later wrote that Gapon was deliberately distracting workers from political struggle by turning their attention to activities like the cooperative store.

<sup>47</sup> Z., "K biografii Gapona," p. 44.



women. She obtained the assistance of two writers who conducted group discussions with other women. Although equality between the sexes was far from complete, women were making great strides and taking an active part in the life of the Assembly. They courageously joined in debates with the men, a significant achievement in Russia at that time.<sup>48</sup>

Father Gapon had strong nationalistic tendencies bordering on vulgar chauvinism. He frequently harangued his audiences with attacks on foreigners. But with the Assembly's expansion, he began suggesting that membership be opened to individuals of all nationalities and religions. Although, like many natives of the southwest, he was not particularly sympathetic to Jews, nonetheless Gapon urged his followers to admit Jews into the Assembly and set an example by his patronage of Finkel'. Despite the specific prohibition in the Assembly's statutes, Jews, non-Russians, and non-Orthodox members were being admitted by the end of 1904.<sup>49</sup>

Always in the midst of activity and constantly in demand as the leader of the Assembly, Father Gapon was also much sought after in his capacity as a priest. Workers came to him to settle personal and family matters. Very often he was asked for help in finding a job or to intercede with employers. In these cases Gapon relied on his connections with the authorities. Sometimes he would approach employers and, aided by some judicious name-dropping, persuade them to give in on some small issue. At other times he would rely on police officials and factory inspectors to apply the necessary pressure. In short, Gapon's followers came to look on him

<sup>48</sup> From unpublished recollections of Karelina cited by Paialin, *Zavod imeni Lenina 1857-1918*, pp. 111-112. On participation of women in the Assembly see also Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 115; Sviatlovskii, p. 83; and Gurevich, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 71, and particularly note 87 on p. 155. See also Pavlov, p. 45; and the statement of Grigor'ev in *Putilovtsy v 1905 godu*, p. 18: "Workers of non-Russian nationalities could not participate [in the activities of the Assembly] according to the statutes, but in practice they did."

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as a one-man arbitrator in labor disputes. When trouble came, they turned to him for protection. His fame spread throughout the working-class quarters.

Often Gapon was approached for financial assistance as well. He helped with money whenever he could, sometimes literally sharing his last kopecks. Despite a good salary at the Transient Jail, Gapon was continually running short. He habitually contributed his own funds for the use of the Assembly. The treasurer of the Assembly, Karelin, recalled that he often found Gapon in such dire straits that he helped him with cash from organizational funds.<sup>50</sup> Gapon's involvement with individual workers provided the personal link between the Assembly and the workers, and his reputation was a major factor in the Assembly's popularity. But a large labor organization could not rely exclusively on personal diplomacy and charity to solve its problems.

With the planned expansion completed, Gapon and his assistants were eager to have the organization's new status reflected in revised statutes. They wanted the Assembly's name changed to one originally proposed—"The Russian Labor Union" (*Russkii rabochii soiuz*)—and they also sought permission to use the mutual-aid funds to help workers on strike. In effect, they strove to legitimize the Assembly as an official representative of the workers and to obtain the right to engage in strike activities.<sup>51</sup> The Assembly was bent on attaining bona fide trade union status. For this reason, plans were discussed for restructuring it as a federation of trade and professional associations rather than a collection of district branches.<sup>52</sup>

Toward the end of 1904, the moderate reforms proposed by Sviatopolk-Mirskii were submitted to the emperor for consideration. On December 12 Nicholas II issued an *ukaz* to the governing senate instructing that body to implement

<sup>50</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 114.

<sup>51</sup> Report of the chief factory inspector of St. Petersburg in Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," p. 44; and Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> Sviatlovskii, p. 93.

some of Sviatopolk-Mirskii's reforms, but deleting the crucial provision for the participation of elected representatives in the state council. On the same day an order was issued prohibiting all illegal meetings and gatherings forthwith. The “spring” had come to an end. Sviatopolk-Mirskii had found less support in the court and government than he expected. The insignificance of the reforms promised in the *ukaz* of December 12 signified a shift of policy by the regime. A few months before they might have been sufficient, but the relative political freedom of the “spring” had helped escalate the demands of the opposition. The limited concessions the autocracy was willing to grant fell far short of even the moderate liberals' proposals.

Having cut short the era of relative freedom, Nicholas II retired with his family to Tsarskoe Selo to escape the clamor of the holiday season in the capital. Confused by the unexpected turn of events, the opposition groped toward a new assault on the autocracy. Meanwhile, the government officials pondered their new course and awaited the imminent demise of Sviatopolk-Mirskii. Despite Nicholas' resolve to stand firm, the regime was not able to tolerate additional setbacks and misfortunes without faltering. On December 20, Port Arthur, the great naval fortress in the Far East which had heroically withstood five months of siege by the Japanese, was ignominiously surrendered by its commander, General A. S. Stessel. The debacle raised cries of indignation from all segments of Russian society blaming the government for the fiasco. The fall of Port Arthur established future Japanese supremacy on the sea and freed the Japanese siege force for action in Manchuria, where the situation threatened to become critical.

Unrest at home and the military defeats had a demoralizing effect on the Russian armed forces. Cases of insubordination and desertion increased. There were riots staged by reservists called to active duty, and whole units, refusing to obey orders to depart, had to be shipped to the Far East by force. A large labor strike broke out in Baku, where, in addition to the usual economic demands for higher pay and

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a shorter work day, the strikers added political demands for civil rights and popular representation. The Social Democrats gained considerable prestige by helping to organize and direct the strike in Baku. Although nothing came of the workers' political demands, the strikers did gain important economic concessions.

In the capital Father Gapon and the Assembly were busily preparing formal openings of the remaining branches. For Gapon and his assistants the end of the year was a period of consolidation and assessment. The Assembly had much to be proud of: it was the largest concentrated organization in Russia. Gapon advised caution in order to avoid squandering the advantages of the organization needlessly. With the holiday season fast approaching, the Assembly planned an elaborate program of Christmas parties for children and various activities for members and their families. Satisfied with their accomplishments, the workers looked forward to rest and a few hours of holiday diversion. Nothing seemed to mar their joy except a persistent rumor that the St. Petersburg factory owners, fearing the Assembly's growing power, had decided to take measures to undermine its strength.

## CHAPTER VI

### *The Putilov Strike*

In the third decade of December the plant administration suddenly dismissed four workers, on the ground that they belonged to the Assembly of Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg.

From the newspaper *Rus'*

Put on your coats, comrades. *Let us go with the Putilov workers to seek truth and justice.*

A call to workers to join the strike

As the power and influence of the Assembly grew, the factory owners became increasingly apprehensive. The formation of a single united organization of employees, particularly one supported by the police authorities, seemed a distinct threat. At the end of 1904 the Assembly did not yet present a menace to the regime. On the contrary, workers in St. Petersburg were the least noticeable element among the opposition. When a street demonstration was organized in the capital by the Social Democrats on November 28, 1904, it proved an utter failure, and one of the Menshevik leaders in St. Petersburg remarked that despite favorable conditions and popular slogans, "The St. Petersburg proletariat did not answer the call of the Social Democratic organization, and the few individuals from the working class passed inconspicuously amidst the not very large mass of students."<sup>1</sup> Despite recurrent labor unrest in other parts of the country, the capital had enjoyed comparative peace and quiet in labor relations during the preceding two years. Only two minor strikes occurred in 1904; both were of short duration, carried out without violence, and quickly settled through arbitration. The employers, however, ascribed these strikes to the influence of the Assembly

<sup>1</sup> Somov, "Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticeskogo dvizheniia," p. 24.

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and resented the arbitrated settlements which were favorable to the workers. They felt this set a dangerous precedent, an encouragement to the Assembly. Factory inspectors sympathized with the businessmen and shared their apprehensions.<sup>2</sup>

The turn of governmental policy toward greater firmness in dealing with agitators coincided with concerted efforts by the management of the largest plant in Russia, the Putilov Works, to counter the growing influence of the Assembly. The Putilov plant, situated in the southwestern Narva district, where the Ekateringofka River flows into the Bay of Finland, was engaged in shipbuilding and arms production. The size of the plant and the critical nature of its production placed it in a special category. Any interruption of its work would have had immediate repercussions in the highest levels of government, and therefore a strike at the plant, especially in wartime, would be a sensitive matter. The twelve thousand workers from the Putilov plant provided the largest single contingent of the Assembly membership, and the Narva Branch, located near the plant, was the organization's largest and most important division. When the branch was originally founded, the plant director, S. I. Smirnov, and one of his assistants (chief of the complaint section, E. E. Iogansen) were very amiably disposed to the organization. Both became sustaining members by donating 100 rubles apiece. Smirnov gave the Assembly permission to use the company auditorium for a concert.<sup>3</sup> Father Gapon utilized the benevolent attitude of the man-

<sup>2</sup> Memoranda of Chizhov in Trusova, 1905, document 132, p. 221; and in R—v (Romanov), "Ianvarskaia zabastovka," pp. 27-28. A good survey of the attitude of industrialists toward labor is to be found in Ermanskii, "Krupnaia burzhuaziiia do 1904 goda," especially pp. 328ff., and "Krupnaia burzhuaziiia v 1905-1907 gg.," pp. 30-100, especially pp. 43ff. Chizhov stated that the Assembly instigated strikes. Sviatlovskii, *Professional'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, p. 93, and Nevskii, *Raboochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni 1905 goda*, pp. 65 and 88, agree with this. Gapon and his aides denied their involvement, and the office of the city governor substantiated their claim.

<sup>3</sup> Smirnov's letter to Rus', December 31, 1904.

agement to settle a number of minor disputes between the management and the workers.

However, director Smirnov had little patience with the trade union aspirations of the Assembly. He watched the growing militancy of workers at the plant with concern. Having the semblance of an organization behind them, the workers were less prone to accept certain management practices, complained more, and generally demanded better treatment. Smirnov occupied an important position among the industrialists of St. Petersburg and in all of Russia as well. He was closely connected with the St. Petersburg Society to Assist in the Improvement and Development of Factory and Mill Industries—essentially a lobby of industrialists. At a conference of representatives of private and state-owned shipbuilding plants held in St. Petersburg in late December of 1904, Smirnov was elected to its seventeen-man council.<sup>4</sup> He had a reputation for steadfast opposition to concessions to workers granted under duress and counseled firmness as the only logical response to labor demands. Smirnov was willing to patronize labor organizations only as long as they refrained from economic struggle. His support for the Assembly quickly eroded as factory owners and inspectors became convinced that the Assembly had indeed set out to struggle for economic goals.<sup>5</sup>

In an effort to counter the Assembly, Smirnov helped promote a rival labor organization. This organization, already existing in the capital, was the original Zubatovite "St. Petersburg Mutual-Aid Society of Workers in Machine Industries" that had received legal sanction even before the Assembly was organized. With the founding of the Assembly the two had planned to merge, but eventually the former Zubatovites were expelled from the Assembly and formed their own organization under the leadership of Ushakov.

<sup>4</sup> *Novoe vremia*, December 24, 1904.

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum of Chizhov to the city governor in Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," p. 44; see also Inozemtsev in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 308.

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The Society drew its membership from among the skilled and better-paid workers. Lower managerial personnel, or foremen, who were specifically excluded from the Assembly, were welcome in the Society. Countering Gapon's ties with the police authorities, Ushakov established close cooperation with the factory inspectors. In the fall of 1904 the Society expanded its activities, holding a large organizational meeting on October 3, 1904. The meeting was attended by General Fullon, and prayers were conducted by Father Ornatskii. Ushakov expressed the gratitude of the membership to their benefactors, particularly singling out factory inspector V. P. Litvinov-Falinskii, whose considerable assistance was acknowledged by the "whole audience rising to its feet."<sup>6</sup>

Soon the Society opened a branch at the Putilov plant, where it was given a warm reception by Smirnov, who donated 500 rubles and allowed the Society to use the company's theater.<sup>7</sup> The Society began competing with the Assembly for membership, but it failed to attract significant numbers of workers (about two hundred and fifty employees had joined by the end of the year) while the Assembly continued to grow rapidly. The Society, however, was successful in recruiting better-paid workers, and among its most ardent supporters at the plant was A. Tetiavkin, foreman (*master*) of the carpentry section of the railroad-wagon building shop.<sup>8</sup> Shop workers frequently complained about the utter arbitrariness of lower managerial personnel, especially foremen, and demands for the removal of particularly obnoxious foremen were a common feature of strikes; but the management and the authorities usually resisted such challenges as a matter of principle.

Master Tetiavkin was extremely arrogant in his treatment of subordinates and was especially hostile to members of

<sup>6</sup> *Rus'*, October 4, 1904, and October 11, 1904. See also Sviatlovskii, p. 95, citing newspaper notices of the ceremony.

<sup>7</sup> *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 1, 1908, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 316; and a somewhat fictionalized account in Mitel'man, *Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda 1801-1917*, pp. 177-178.



the Assembly. On December 4, 1904, a workman in Tetiavkin's shop and member of the Assembly, Sergunin, received considerably less pay than he expected. When he complained to Tetiavkin, the latter told him he was fired, accompanying this announcement with some derogatory references toward the Assembly. Sergunin appealed to the head of the complaint section, Iogansen, but, failing to get satisfaction, declared that he would ask the Assembly to intercede with the city governor and have Tetiavkin fired.<sup>9</sup>

Three weeks later several more members of the Assembly were threatened by Tetiavkin, and three long-time workers—Subbotin, Ukolov, and Fedorov—were said to have lost their jobs. Subbotin, an active, early member of the Assembly who had held an elective office, lost his job over a minor issue: misunderstanding a work assignment, he failed to show up at the appointed time after missing a day due to illness. Tetiavkin told him he was fired. When Subbotin said he would complain to the Assembly, Tetiavkin allegedly answered sarcastically, "Go to your Assembly, it will do everything for you."<sup>10</sup> With Subbotin looking on, Tetiavkin then turned to his assistant and commented, "I know how the members of the Assembly get sick; why should they work at the plant when they can receive their subsistence from their comrades?"<sup>11</sup> The new dismissals lent credence to a rumor circulating among the Putilov workers that the management was intent on firing all members of the Assembly.

Initially the excitement at the Narva Branch was not taken seriously by the rest of the Assembly. It was thought that the dismissed workers were exaggerating the matter. Gapon attributed the incident to a minor misunderstanding and suggested the dismissed workers appeal to the plant director and factory inspectors. In all likelihood he personally attempted to mediate for the workers, as was his usual

<sup>9</sup> Chizhov to city governor, in Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Ianov, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 316.

<sup>11</sup> Chizhov, in Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," p. 43.

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style, but he wrote, "During the first two weeks I personally avoided becoming involved in this matter, expecting that the dismissed workers would be reinstated as a result of intercession with the plant administration."<sup>12</sup> The continued agitation in the Narva Branch finally persuaded Gapon to inquire into the matter, and he instructed Inozemtsev, one of the branch officers, to conduct an investigation.<sup>13</sup> After a conference with Inozemtsev, Gapon changed his attitude. Varnashev recalled, "We had thought the workers were dismissed for a reason, and only when Gapon returned from the Narva Branch and said he saw the dismissals as a challenge to the Assembly did we realize the gravity of the situation."<sup>14</sup> Pavlov candidly summarized the prevailing feeling among the members of the Assembly:

... There is no doubt at all that the firing of three workers, and notices given three more members of the Assembly, were trial balloons sent up by the Putilov plant. There are indirect indications that this incident was the result of a general conference of the directors of several plants.<sup>15</sup>

Now the entire membership of the Assembly was aroused over the dismissals at the Putilov plant. Gapon called for a general meeting with twenty delegates sent to represent each branch. On December 27 over three hundred and fifty workers gathered at the Basil Island Branch. Inozemtsev

<sup>12</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Inozemtsev, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 308. The workers' side in the dispute was described by V. Avchinnikova in "Zabastovka na Putilovskom zavode," *Rus'*, January 6, 1905. Smirnov and Chizhov wrote letters to the editor disputing this account.

<sup>14</sup> Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei," p. 202.

<sup>15</sup> Pavlov, "Iz vospominanii o rabochem soiuze," p. 80. Smirnov denied this, and there is no proof that such a conspiracy ever existed. The industrialists, as well as some officials, were alarmed by the growth of the Assembly, and their growing antagonism toward the Assembly seemed to substantiate the worst fears of the workers, feeding the widely believed rumors that in fact there was a conspiracy on the part of the business community to destroy the Assembly.

reported on his investigations, attacking the Putilov management for its actions. The meeting was attended by a number of workers with revolutionary sympathies who pressed for resolute action, but more moderate opinions prevailed as evidenced by the election of Inozemtsev, a known opponent of radical action, to chair the meeting.<sup>16</sup> The representatives decided to dispatch delegations to the city governor, the director of the Putilov plant, and the chief factory inspector requesting the reinstatement of the dismissed workers and the punishment of Tetiavkin. The delegations were also to demand assurances against similar dismissals without just cause in the future.<sup>17</sup>

While the meeting was going on in the hall, Gapon gathered some of his assistants in a back room to prepare a resolution. Several journalists were present, and Gapon was anxious to involve them in order to generate favorable publicity for the Assembly. Arkhangel'skii and his wife V. Avchinnikova actively participated, and when a representative of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency, A. Filippov, arrived, he was immediately invited to help draft the resolution. During the discussion someone suggested the resolution be supported by a strike. According to Filippov, the suggestion at first brought on embarrassed silence, followed

<sup>16</sup> Okhrana report in 1905, document 1, p. 3; Mitel'man, p. 180.

<sup>17</sup> Ianov, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 308-309. The Assembly now received wide publicity. Russian papers carried accounts of this meeting and the demands; see *Rus'*, December 29, 1904; *Russkie vedomosti*, December 29, 1904. Foreign papers also carried extensive coverage of developments in St. Petersburg from that time on. *The Times* (London), January 11, 1905, for example, reported this meeting in some detail, as did the *New York Times*. Particularly good accounts appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, whose correspondent, E. J. Dillon, had an excellent background in Russian affairs and good contacts in the capital. The *Manchester Guardian* also benefited from the good contacts its correspondent, Williams, had established in Russian liberal circles. Generally speaking, foreign press coverage was good. Paul Miliukov, who was traveling in the United States at this time, was so impressed by the extensive and timely coverage of events in Russia, even in local papers along his way, that he remarked he could not have been better informed in St. Petersburg (*Vospominaniia* [1859-1917], vol. 1, p. 250). The revolutionary and underground press also followed the developments with great interest.

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by the "enthusiastic endorsement of Gapon and rather skeptical comments from Arkhangel'skii."<sup>18</sup> Gapon wrote in his memoirs:

I decided it was the duty of the organization to espouse the cause of these men and to stand up for them until the end, come what may. If we abandoned them to their fate, the authority of the Assembly would be shaken, possibly fatally, and similar arbitrary actions would be encouraged; while, on the other hand, if we succeeded in obtaining their reinstatement, our prestige in the eyes of the laboring population would be tremendously increased.<sup>19</sup>

The final text of the resolution concluded with the veiled threat that, if the demands were not met, the Assembly could not guarantee the preservation of order among the workers of St. Petersburg.

Gapon then made an impassioned speech to the representatives. He explained the seriousness of the crisis facing the Assembly and vowed to leave the organization if they failed to win satisfaction of the demands. He then asked the representatives to swear they would follow him to the end and received an enthusiastic ovation.<sup>20</sup> After delegations were selected to present the resolution to the appropriate authorities, the meeting was adjourned to await further developments. The holiday season had suddenly turned from a time of rejoicing into a period of foreboding. The leadership of the Assembly, particularly Father Gapon, clearly perceived the Putilov issue as one of fundamental importance. The very role of the Assembly as a workers' organization was being brought into question; its capability and will to fight for the rights of workers was about to be tested.

On December 28 the delegations selected at the meeting

<sup>18</sup> Filippov, "Stranichka iz proshlogo. (O Gapone)," p. 110.

<sup>19</sup> Gapon, *Story of My Life*, p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 77.

set off on their appointed missions. A ten-man delegation headed by Gapon and Karelin went to see the city governor, who greeted them very cordially. Informed of their business, he asked to see Gapon alone in his office. Gapon gave General Fullon the resolution and the minutes of the meeting. The city governor was visibly upset by the concluding statement of the resolution. "But this is a real revolution. You are threatening the peace of the capital," he exclaimed. Gapon hastened to calm him with assurances that the workers "do not even contemplate any threat; they simply want to help their comrades." He reminded Fullon of his promises to assist workers in need and implored the general to speak to the workers and see their determination for himself.<sup>21</sup> The city governor received the workers' delegation very amiably, shook hands with all of them, and listened to their story. He promised to do his best to obtain satisfaction of their demands.<sup>22</sup>

The other delegation, headed by Arkhangel'skii, visited the chief factory inspector of St. Petersburg, Chizhov. The reception in his offices was extremely cool. Chizhov began by refusing to talk with the journalist, Arkhangel'skii, calling him "a completely unnecessary intermediary between himself and the workers."<sup>23</sup> When the workers explained their business, Chizhov declared that he could not accept the complaints of delegations and suggested that the dismissed workers come to see him themselves so he could start an official investigation. Later, in an unofficial discussion in his own apartment, Chizhov told Arkhangel'skii that he considered labor organizations with leaders from non-worker backgrounds generally undesirable. He felt the Assembly had grown accustomed to being pampered by the authorities, but sooner or later it would be "necessary to

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Karelin, "Deviatioe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 110.

<sup>23</sup> From memoranda of Chizhov in R—v (Romanov), "Ianvarskaia zabastovka," p. 28. In the report above Chizhov gives December 30 as the date for this meeting. In other reports written right after the meeting, he gives the correct date of December 28. For example, see Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapon," p. 42.

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turn it down in something, and then, naturally, as could be expected, the disappointed workers would attribute the rejection to most sinister motives."<sup>24</sup> Finally, Chizhov concluded, he considered the development of a system of intermediaries between workers, factory administrations, and the inspectorate an obfuscation of the real issues.

The next morning, December 29, the daily press began to give extensive coverage to the dispute. The newspaper *Rus'* gave details of the meeting on December 27 and repeated the rumor that the dismissal of the workers resulted from a unanimous decision of the St. Petersburg industrialists to fire all members of the Assembly.<sup>25</sup> The articles in the press were sympathetic to the workers, doubtless a direct effect of Gapon's public relations efforts. When the delegation of the Assembly, led by its chairman, Vasil'ev, arrived to talk with director Smirnov, the reception could not have been more frigid. *Vstretil v kol'ia*, or "He met us with a club," as Karelin put it.<sup>26</sup> Smirnov was incensed over the articles in the newspapers that morning, particularly the story in *Rus'*. He also must have been contacted by the city governor, who was trying to pressure him into backing down. Although Smirnov was compelled to modify his position on the question of the dismissed workers, he was not about to compromise on the principles involved in the dispute: the right of the Assembly to represent its members. He resented all unauthorized interference in the affairs of his plant.

When the delegation presented its complaints, Smirnov began by inquiring whether the workers considered such meddling in the internal affairs of an enterprise to be within their competence as defined by the Assembly's statutes. The workers replied in the affirmative. After asking about the particulars of the dispute, Smirnov again reminded the delegates that it was difficult for an outside organization

<sup>24</sup> Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," pp. 42-43.

<sup>25</sup> *Rus'*, December 29, 1904; also see *Russkie vedomosti* for the same date.

<sup>26</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 110.

like the Assembly to be fully apprised of personnel matters at the plant. According to his inquiries, the director stated, the delegation did not have the facts of the dispute straight. Smirnov offered to conduct an inquiry if the workers involved in the dismissals would submit an official complaint. Until that time, however, "to initiate an inquiry on the basis of an outside request would be hardly appropriate." When one of the workers pointed out that past complaints to the administration had gone unheeded, forcing the workers to turn to the Assembly for help, Smirnov replied that he saw no point in further discussion. A heated exchange ensued, and Smirnov was warned ("threatened," as he complained to the city governor) that, unless the Assembly demands were satisfied, "the matter might end very badly for the plant."<sup>27</sup>

While the delegation from the Assembly spoke to Smirnov, the four workers involved in the dispute were discussing their case with factory inspector Chizhov, who appeared unsympathetic. After listening to their stories, he suggested that they pursue the matter in Smirnov's office. The discouraged workers replied that, given Smirnov's attitude, there seemed little hope of gaining anything from further discussions with him. The meeting was interrupted by the arrival of Father Gapon, who asked to see Chizhov alone.

According to Chizhov, Gapon wanted him to join forces with the Assembly. Unlike some factory inspectors and officials of the ministry of finance (Gapon singled out Litvinov-Falinskii and the chief of the department of industry, N. P. Langovoi, as examples), Chizhov had been friendly to the Assembly in the past. Therefore Gapon requested that Chizhov renounce Ushakov's organization and conclude an alliance with the Assembly or face unpleasant consequences. "To my question whether his statement concerning the hostility of the workers meant that I might be killed, he

<sup>27</sup> Smirnov's letter to the city governor in Okun', ed., *Putilovets v trekh revoliutsiakh*, p. 52.

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answered, 'Yes.'"<sup>28</sup> In reply Chizhov made it very clear that he had little or no sympathy for the Assembly and its leader, whose activities surpassed the limits allowed by the statutes. The Assembly, he said, ". . . while having done almost nothing to promote mutual aid, already leads its members down the path of struggle with capital by means of strikes."<sup>29</sup> Chizhov added that he could act only in strict compliance with existing laws, implying that the Assembly's request was in violation of legal norms. In parting, Gapon reflected that the inspector "did not even realize what will be happening in a month." He also asked that their conversation be transmitted to the higher authorities, meaning General Fullon.<sup>30</sup>

Smirnov was still fuming from his confrontation with the workers' delegation when Chizhov arrived, expecting to meet with Gapon and the dismissed workers. Discouraged by the delegation's reception that morning, the workers failed to appear. After a cursory examination of the facts, their case was decided by Chizhov and Smirnov. The chief factory inspector, who apparently did not have the facts of the dispute straight in any case, completely agreed with the management in his report to the city governor. According to the Chizhov report, Ukolov and Fedorov were only threatened with dismissal after missing part of a work day, but Subbotin stopped coming to work of his own accord and was thus subject to dismissal after a three-day absence.<sup>31</sup> In the case of Sergunin, Chizhov supported the plant administration's argument:

Sergunin was dismissed for laziness and inaptitude for work; whether he was or was not a member of the Society of Russian Workers did not matter at all, while Subbotin, Fedorov, and Ukolov were not even

<sup>28</sup> Chizhov in Romanov, "K kharakteristike Gapona," pp. 43-44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.



dismissed. Consequently the commotion raised on December twenty-seventh in the Society of Russian Workers was all for nothing and evidently quite artificial.<sup>32</sup>

Although Chizhov dismissed the Assembly workers' charges of intimidation as unfounded, in reality he deliberately sanctioned the management's practices. His justification of Sergunin's dismissal clearly documents the subtle conspiracy between the plant management and the factory inspectorate. Sergunin, employed at the plant since 1890, had been working as acting foreman on the night shift for two years. According to Chizhov, Sergunin was a "senior worker," not a foreman, and his fourteen-year record at the plant was marred by some irregularities. When Sergunin's work productivity suddenly began to decline, the management inquired into the matter only to discover that Sergunin had joined the Assembly and was spending too much time at the local branch.<sup>33</sup> Thus, though Sergunin was ostensibly fired for poor work, the implication was clear that membership in the Assembly had a negative influence on work productivity. By accepting this reasoning, Chizhov in effect collaborated with Smirnov, verifying the workers' contention that they were facing an organized effort to undermine the Assembly.

While Chizhov was writing his highly prejudicial report to the city governor, Smirnov was composing his own memorandum for General Fullon. In recounting his meeting with the representatives of the Assembly, Smirnov was particularly incensed by their "demanding" rather than "suppliant" tone. He concluded:

. . . the attempt of the "Assembly of Russian Factory-Mill Workers" to interfere in the internal affairs of the plant, under a very thinly veiled threat to create unrest

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> See Chizhov's memorandum written later to the minister of finance, in 1905, document 132, p. 222.

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among the workers in the event of refusal, is absolutely clear. In addition to my personal report, I have the honor to inform your Excellency of such obvious violations of the statutes of the Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg.<sup>34</sup>

The next morning Smirnov hung out a notice on the gates of the plant castigating the Assembly's actions. He stated that only one worker was fired and firmly reiterated his rejection of the Assembly's claim to negotiate on behalf of its members. He sternly warned his employees, particularly the members of the Assembly, of his intention to inform the city governor that the Assembly was violating its approved statutes.<sup>35</sup>

That same day Smirnov wrote letters to *Rus'* and *Russkaia gazeta* replying to their articles on the dispute. He denied that the dismissal of workers resulted from the decision of a conference of industrialists and pointed out that he personally had given financial support to the Assembly in the past. Recounting the stories of the dismissed workers, he stated that only one had been fired while another was subject to dismissal. Smirnov claimed that both cases were reviewed and approved by the chief factory inspector on December 22, a curious contradiction of Chizhov's report, which placed Subbotin's dismissal a week later! In his concluding remarks Smirnov came to the heart of the matter:

I consider it essential to pose the question: on what grounds does the Assembly of Factory Workers have the audacity to intrude into the private affairs of an individual plant by presenting, as the article stated, "demands"? I presume that, in order to present them, one must have rights granted by law, and this, of course, the Assembly does not have. What will happen

<sup>34</sup> Smirnov to the city governor in Okun', p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> Text of notice in notes to Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, note 103, pp. 161-162.

if private enterprises, having lost their natural rights to freely administer their businesses within the limits allowed them by law, were forced to follow the wishes and orders of outside organizations?<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the week it became clear that the moderate efforts of the Assembly were failing. The intransigent position of the Putilov management supported by the chief factory inspector (representing the ministry of finance) challenged not only the Assembly's claim to represent its members, but also its very existence as an organization. The denunciations of the Assembly for violation of its statutes and the accompanying demands for reprisal put the city governor in a difficult position. He was not unsympathetic to the position of the Assembly and probably attempted to intercede on behalf of the workers (the reinstatement of two workers in all likelihood resulted from Fullon's personal appeal), but the management of the plant stood firm on issues of policy. By demanding strict compliance with the law, Smirnov challenged the basic policies of the ministry of the interior permitting police-organized, legal labor unions to operate.

To the Assembly the issue was a matter of life or death. Despite a seeming compromise in the reinstatement of two dismissed workers, the two most active members had been fired. In defiance of Smirnov, the workers overwhelmingly stood behind the Assembly leadership. A great influx of new members joined the organization, including a majority of the Putilov workers. So many workers came to the branch meetings that it became impossible to control attendance, and everyone was admitted, whether they had joined officially or not.

On Friday, December 31, Gapon went to see his old friend Pavlov, who had quit the Assembly in November due to some disagreements with Gapon and Mme. Nemetti. Gapon asked Pavlov to return and quite candidly discussed

<sup>36</sup> Letter to *Rus'*, December 31, 1904.

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the situation facing the Assembly. Saying he was ready to fight to the end and die on the barricades if necessary, Gapon presented the following scenario. If the demands submitted to the Putilov plant were not satisfied, they would strike the plant and expand the strike until the entire working class of St. Petersburg joined them. As the strike grew in intensity, they would increase their demands to include political questions. When Pavlov doubted his sincerity, Gapon gloomily answered that there was no point in lying since he was personally doomed. Even if the outcome were successful, Gapon was certain that the government would not look kindly on his role and would put an end to his activities. He became emotional talking about the distrust that still prevailed among some of his followers and finally began to cry. Pavlov, who had seen Gapon cry once before when he was called an *agent provocateur* at one of the meetings, recalled, "At that time the impression he made was truly striking . . . I was again touched to the bottom of my heart and felt great pity for this genuinely suffering man."<sup>37</sup>

That weekend was the end of the year holiday. On Sunday, January 2, at six in the evening (the deadline for answering the demands), a general open meeting convened at the Basil Island Branch to hear the reports of the delegations and decide on further action. Over six hundred workers filled the hall, and again Inozemtsev chaired the meeting. He opened with a discussion of Smirnov's response and was followed by Arkhangel'skii, who, after relating his conversation with Chizhov, concluded that the workers could not expect any help from the factory inspectorate. Acting on a proposal by Inozemtsev, the audience unanimously voted to "support their comrades." On a motion by a worker from the Putilov plant, it was decided that on Monday morning, January 3, workers at Putilov would show up at the appointed time but, instead of going to work, "without shouts and noise, and without violence, would gather at the

<sup>37</sup> Pavlov, pp. 85-86.

office of the plant to demand that master Tetiavkin be fired and the dismissed workers reinstated."<sup>38</sup>

The workers' desire to avoid a violent or revolutionary appearance was attested to in the report of an Okhrana agent present at the meeting. He observed three Jewish "intelligently" and three Jewesses, apparently students, at the meeting. When one of them suggested that the workers carry a red flag and demand political freedom, Inozemtsev replied that it was necessary to remain strictly within economic demands and not touch political matters. When the "same Jew tried to distribute several leaflets, he was immediately stopped by a general protest of the workers and driven out (*byl vygnan*) of the club with the rest of the Jews."<sup>39</sup> Two other workers known to the police unsuccessfully tried to induce the Putilovtsy to make the strike compulsory by threatening nonstrikers with violence. But the unanimous decision to strike was made in a mood of restraint: "Workers were told to behave calmly and with discipline in every respect in order not to permit even a single word of accusation against themselves. They were also told not to listen to any instructions except those coming directly from the Assembly to each district."<sup>40</sup>

At Putilov the next morning workers from the wood-processing shop dispersed throughout the plant proclaiming a strike and calling on others to join them. A crowd of about twenty-five hundred strikers gathered in front of the director's office, demanding to speak with him. At first Smirnov refused to address the crowd and suggested that delegates be selected to talk with him. He was summoned again and told that all those in the front ranks of the strikers could be considered elected representatives. The strikers demanded that Tetiavkin be fired and the dismissed

<sup>38</sup> From Okhrana report, 1905, document 1, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. The report mentions workers previously involved in Social Democratic circles, Aleksandr Rebrantov and Petr Priklonskii, as being active at the meeting. There are indications that an old, blind Social Democrat, Bolshevik V. A. Shelgunov, spoke at this meeting. See statement of Grigor'ev in *Putilovtsy v 1905 godu*, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Pavlov, p. 87.

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workers reinstated. Smirnov replied that he had not found fault with Tetiavkin and did not consider it fair to fire him just because the workers demanded it, but he offered to conduct a new investigation of the dismissal dispute if the workers returned to their jobs. The strikers categorically refused. In his memoirs Gapon recalled that Smirnov made some derogatory remarks about him before the crowd, prompting one angry worker to pull out a knife and threaten the director.<sup>41</sup> An Okhrana report, on the other hand, emphasized the peaceful dispersement of the workers after Smirnov refused to grant their demands.<sup>42</sup>

Soon after his clash with the strikers, Smirnov posted another notice on the gates, but this time the tone was more conciliatory. After reporting his exchange with the strikers, Smirnov said he regretted that so many workers believed "these inaccurate and highly exaggerated stories about the dispute. . ." and hoped the strike, "which, I have reason to believe, is not supported by quite a few of our workers," would be settled soon. In conclusion Smirnov warned the workers that if they did not resume work within three days, he would be compelled to dismiss them in accordance with existing regulations.<sup>43</sup>

At approximately one o'clock that afternoon Father Gapon arrived at the Narva Branch where he found a large crowd of workers in a very agitated state. Learning of the events at the plant that morning, Gapon praised the behavior of the strikers. He asked the crowd, "Do we have a right to defend our comrades?" and was drowned in thun-

<sup>41</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>42</sup> While Okhrana agents stressed the peaceful nature of the protest (1905, document 3, p. 6), Chizhov pointed to the violence used by strikers to compel others to join them; see R—v (Romanov), "Ianvar-skaia zabastovska," p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> Text of notice in *Novoe vremia*, January 5, 1905; see also Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, note 106, pp. 163-164. Article 105, paragraph 1, of the industrial code allowed employers to dismiss workers for missing three days of work.

<sup>44</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 81-82.

derous applause.<sup>44</sup> He then read a new list of grievances incorporating the basic aims of the strike:

- (1) Dismissal of Tetiavkin and reinstatement of the two remaining workers, Sergunin and Subbotin.
- (2) Determination of rates for new items on the production line by mutual agreement between elected representatives from the shop and foremen, and these rates thereafter to be considered obligatory. All current rates to be revised in a similar manner.
- (3) Participation by a permanent committee of elected representatives with the plant administration in the investigation of complaints by individual workers.
- (4) Amnesty for the strikers.
- (5) Excuse from absence of workers while on strike, and agreement by the administration to pay strikers while the plant was closed down.

Gapon explained the demands and distributed hectographed copies.<sup>45</sup> Two of the new demands for a voice for workers in some administrative matters showed his efforts to turn the growing protest toward trade union practices and must have been suggested to him by procedures of trade unions abroad. Although Gapon recalled that his proposals were enthusiastically accepted by acclamation, an Okhrana agent reported: "The workers decided to stand firmly by their original demands, even if that meant extending the strike for an undetermined length of time. Many workers were not in sympathy with the demands put forward by Father Gapon and would not be particularly insistent on their complete satisfaction." According to the Okhrana report, the strikers decided to return to the plant the next morning and resume work only if the administration agreed to satisfy their demands.<sup>46</sup>

The machinery for a prolonged and extensive strike was

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, and note 107 on pp. 164-165. Also 1905, documents 3 and 5, pp. 5-6 and 7.

<sup>46</sup> 1905, document 3, p. 6.

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now set in motion. Lists of demands were sent to other branches and various factories in St. Petersburg. A strike committee was organized to aid needy strikers and their families. Membership in the Assembly was opened to all workers. In violation of the Assembly's statutes, all new membership fees were assigned to aid the strikers. Finally, it was decided to spread the strike to other plants and factories if the demands were not satisfied within two days. After Gapon left the Narva Branch, Inozemtsev read and explained the list of demands to continuous meetings of strikers.<sup>47</sup>

Later that afternoon Gapon received a telephone call from General Fullon, who tried to sound encouraging. He said that he had been informed in a conversation with Witte, then chairman of the council of ministers, that the Putilov management had agreed to take back one worker and reconsider the dismissal of the other two. Gapon replied that more than the jobs of four workers was now involved. He suggested that the management of the plant negotiate with "the chairman of my union and representatives of the strikers." He warned Fullon of the deep discontent among the workers, cautioning that the entire working class of the capital might go on strike. He implored the city governor to trust him and his followers to control the workers. Although the situation might get worse, he begged, "In any event, avoid using force. Do not bring out the Cossacks. Perhaps the workers will want to submit a petition to the tsar; do not be alarmed; everything will be orderly and peaceful. The workers only want to be heard."<sup>48</sup> Finally,

<sup>47</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 81. Illegal use of Assembly funds to support strikers is corroborated by other sources. See Gurevich, *9-ianuaria*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 82-83. Gapon's account of events becomes extremely confused at this point. He frequently interpolates facts and figures. With the advent of the crisis, the autobiography cannot be relied upon for accuracy. Here he seems to combine various conversations spread over several days, including facts that could not have been discussed that day. The number of dismissed workers was two, not three, and the idea of a petition to the tsar was only beginning to germinate in his mind. He could not have expressed it so clearly to Fullon at that time.



Gapon extracted a promise that neither he nor his assistants would be arrested.

That evening Gapon sent a message to the Narva Branch instructing its leaders to select a delegation to meet with Smirnov the next day.<sup>49</sup> News of the strike had spread quickly through the working quarters of the city, and by evening the branches were filled to overflowing. On Tuesday the Putilov strike began to affect other factories. During lunch hour a delegation from the Putilov plant approached workers from the Franco-Russian Machine and Ship-building Plant (employing over two thousand workers) and gained their support for the protest. The Franco-Russian workers held a meeting at the local branch of the Assembly and drew up a list of demands based on the Putilov demands which was presented to the management of the plant later that day. Unrest was evident at other plants as well.<sup>50</sup>

Late Tuesday afternoon Gapon arrived at the Narva Branch to lead the delegation of thirty-five workers to Smirnov. He told the assembled workers that he had assurances from the city governor that they would not be prevented from presenting their demands, but he warned, "There must be no disorder that could lead to police interference."<sup>51</sup> The list of demands the delegation carried was a considerably expanded version of those put forward by the strikers the day before and included suggestions brought up by workers during meetings. The additional demands called for: (1) reduction of the work day to eight hours; (2) a three-shift work day; (3) elimination of overtime work; (4) increase of minimum daily wages for unskilled workers from 60 kopecks to one ruble for males, and from 40 kopecks to 75 kopecks for females; (5) improvement of sanitary conditions; and (6) free medical care.<sup>52</sup>

At the meeting with Smirnov Father Gapon presented

<sup>49</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 318.

<sup>50</sup> Okhrana report, 1905, document 6, p. 8. The meeting at the local branch is described in *Nashi dni*, January 5, 1905.

<sup>51</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 318.

<sup>52</sup> Okhrana report, 1905, document 5, p. 7.

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and explained the workers' demands, constantly turning to the delegates standing behind him for confirmation: "Is that right, comrades?"<sup>53</sup>

Smirnov, who previously may have contemplated some concessions, was taken aback by the new demands. He categorically refused to fire Tetiavkin<sup>54</sup> and claimed that a pay increase would "make beggars out of the shareholders of the Putilov corporation."<sup>55</sup> His comment was greeted by a roar of laughter. The workers blamed the continuation and expansion of the strike on Smirnov's intransigence. Smirnov in turn accused Gapon of instigating the strike and vowed he would "never permit some outside organization that has nothing to do with the plant to dictate its policies."<sup>56</sup> In parting, Gapon said he no longer considered Smirnov a competent representative of the plant and proposed to appeal directly to the board of the Putilov corporation the next day.<sup>57</sup>

The delegation then returned to the branch where Gapon informed the workers of Smirnov's response. He again thanked the strikers for maintaining "complete order without violence" and suggested a delegation be chosen to meet with the board of directors of the Putilov plant. An Okhrana agent filing his report noted, "The attitude of the workers is peaceful but determined; the possibility of reducing the demands is not discussed."<sup>58</sup>

On January 5, over ten thousand additional workers from several large enterprises joined the strike in support of their comrades at the Putilov Works. The Neva Branch of the Assembly was instrumental in organizing a strike at the huge Nevskii Machine and Ship-building Plant which employed over six thousand workers, many of whom were

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of justice memorandum, 1905, document 9, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> In June 1905, there was another strike at Putilov, and workers demanded the dismissal of Tetiavkin again. Smirnov promptly transferred him to another job, and this pacified the workers. The statement of Smirnov is in *Okun'*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>55</sup> Okhrana report, 1905, document 5, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Chizhov in R—v (Romanov), "Ianvarskaia zabastovka," p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 318.

<sup>58</sup> 1905, document 5, p. 7.

members of the Assembly. The Neva Branch, second only to the Narva in size, was very active in recruiting new members. Its chairman, N. Petrov, an employee of the Nevskii plant, was a close adherent of Gapon and participated in the inner councils of the Assembly.<sup>59</sup> Meetings at the branch helped to organize support for a strike, and, when a delegation from the Putilov plant appealed for support, the Assembly members agreed to join the strike immediately. But on the morning of the fifth, Petrov and his assistants had some difficulty persuading the rest of the workers to join the walkout. No one wanted to take the first step. Suddenly a loud whistle sounded and the lights went out. "This darkness raised the spirits of our comrades," commented Petrov.<sup>60</sup> One of the participants recalled how the strike started in his shop:

I came to the shop on January 5 at 7:00 A.M. We quietly sang a prayer. . . . I lit a candle, placed an oiler in the vices and had already begun to saw when a certain turner, N., came in and said: "Change clothes, comrades! *Let us go with the Putilov workers to seek truth and justice.*" I listened to him, thinking that he was joking. . . . I started to work again. Suddenly I heard the repeated ringing of the bells and thought something was amiss. I looked around—the workers were changing and so did I. We went to other shops and proposed that the work be stopped. Workers dressed without protest and left. . . .<sup>61</sup>

The strikers agreed to gather at the Neva Branch at five o'clock in the afternoon to work out a set of demands to be presented to the plant administration.

<sup>59</sup> Petrov tried to quit work at the plant on January 4, but the plant administration would not release him (Petrov, p. 46).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Statement of a worker in Gurevich, p. 8. Italics in the original. Workers leaving the plant mentioned some specific complaints, but said that lists of complaints would be presented later. Okhrana report of January 5, 1905, document 11, p. 14.

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In a similar fashion other plants went on strike until by the fifth the local Putilov dispute had mushroomed into a major labor protest, with rumors of additional plants about to go on strike rapidly multiplying.<sup>62</sup> The branches became the focus of attention for the Russian and foreign press, as well as for the Okhrana. Petrov was singled out in Okhrana reports as the organizer of the Nevskii strike.<sup>63</sup> With the strike at the Nevskii plant underway, Petrov hurried to meet Gapon. He accompanied the priest on visits to several newspapers where Gapon hoped to gain additional support and publicity for the Assembly. Preoccupied with such affairs, Gapon forgot to meet at the appointed time the Narva group delegated to approach the board of directors of the Putilov corporation. While the delegates waited for him at the Narva Branch, Gapon arrived at the designated meeting place accompanied by Petrov and a newspaper reporter from *Nashi dni*, A. I. Matiushenskii. Eventually the other delegates also arrived, and the meeting finally got under way at six in the evening.<sup>64</sup>

The workers opened their discussion with the board by explaining that the immediate cause of the strike was "the unwillingness of the plant director to remove master Tetiavkin, who for quite some time had been arbitrarily dismissing workers without sufficient reason."<sup>65</sup> When the board chairman, K. A. Shestakov, asked why they had not reported these abuses before, the workers replied that they had indeed complained, but all their complaints to the plant director were ineffective, and the guilty remained unpunished. Confessing that he had been unaware of their dissatisfaction, Shestakov assured the workers that the directors would have responded to their complaints. The meeting was thus begun very amiably, with the board patiently and sympathetically listening to the arguments of the work-

<sup>62</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 318.

<sup>63</sup> 1905, document 11, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> The meeting was widely reported in the press. Gapon does not mention it in his autobiography, but there are short accounts of it by Ianov and Petrov.

<sup>65</sup> *Novoe vremia*, January 8, 1905.

ers. After the initial amicable exchanges, the chairman expressed his hope that it would be possible to make concessions on both sides. The board then divided the specific demands into three groups: the first required legislative action; the second could not be decided without a general meeting of the stockholders; and only the third category, dealing with internal plant matters, could be resolved by the board on its own authority, though not immediately.<sup>66</sup> The directors made it very clear that no action would be taken until the workers returned to their jobs, and Shestakov concluded with an expression of confidence in Smirnov. He warned the workers that unless they returned to work immediately, the director had been instructed to shut down the plant.<sup>67</sup>

The meeting, begun on such a promising note, ended in bitter disappointment for the Putilov workers. Despite its show of concern, the board had rejected all their demands. Granted, the list of demands had been enlarged, but then so had the scope of the strike. The demands, originally centered on a local dispute, now expressed the general grievances of all workers out on strike. Minor concessions, such as the reinstatement of two dismissed workers, were inadequate in the face of the growing wave of unrest. On all other matters the employers took an uncompromising position, refusing to deal with substantive issues and requiring workers to return to their jobs before even minor grievances could be discussed.

After the unsuccessful discussion with the board of directors of the Putilov corporation, the workers decided not to send any more delegations, but instead to organize a general strike in support of their demands.<sup>68</sup> Thus the local strike at Putilov was to become a general strike and the list of demands expanded to reflect grievances of the entire working-class population of the capital. Gapon instructed the Putilov delegates to return to the branches, explain to the workers the intransigence of the employers, and call for

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Russkie vedomosti*, January 8 1905.

<sup>68</sup> Petrov, p. 48.

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a general strike. He promised to seek a personal audience with the minister of the interior the next day to explain the gravity of the situation and plead with Sviatopolk-Mirskii to do something for the workers. If, however, the employers pushed the issue to a confrontation, Gapon intended to make it clear that the Assembly would not back down. He felt that the uncompromising attitude of the employers would only force more workers into the Assembly's ranks and thereby strengthen their cause.<sup>69</sup>

That evening the branches began to promote the idea of presenting a list of workers' grievances supported by a general strike. How this was to be done and the exact content of the list were not yet known, but the old idea of a workers' petition found ready response. The workers' statement of demands would have to go to the very top, and Gapon, unable to get satisfaction from the employers and officials, was willing to go over their heads to the highest authorities: the minister of the interior, and even the tsar himself. Concluding his speech at the Vyborg Branch, Gapon told his audience, "The tsar does not know of our needs, and we will tell him. If he loves his people, he will grant them their humble supplications."<sup>70</sup> Gapon was to draft the list, which was to be ready by the afternoon of the following day, but in the meantime the provisions of the Program-of-the-Five were read as the basic draft of the petition, and the collection of signatures under it was begun.

Thursday, January 6, was a major religious holiday and a free day for the workers. Large crowds milled around the branches, where continuous meetings were in progress, discussing the strike and the provisions of the proposed list of grievances. When one crowd finished listening to a speaker explain these demands, another immediately took its place. Outside, workers either waited in line to get into the halls or joined one of the impromptu meetings taking place in the street. The police, fearful of provoking an incident, did not interfere with the orderly crowds.

<sup>69</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 318.

<sup>70</sup> Recalled by Varnashev, p. 203.

The general strike and the idea of workers' demands were enthusiastically endorsed by the crowds at the branches. During meetings workers offered suggestions from the floor, and these were duly recorded, so that the leadership of the Assembly soon had a broad range of grievances to draw upon in formulating the final list. As the membership expanded to take in thousands of new workers and organize all of them behind the strike and the petition, the Assembly became de-facto spokesman for the entire working class of St. Petersburg. Rank and file members were primarily responsible for the success of this drive. They made newly arriving workers feel welcome, helped to run the meetings, maintained exemplary order in and around the branches, disseminated information, and made sure that instructions issued by the leadership were carried out. They were everywhere—arguing, explaining, convincing workers to join—and their dedication was a testament to the close rapport between the leaders and the membership of the organization.

Throughout the day activity at the branches continued unabated; the atmosphere was frenzied. Representatives from various factories met at the branches to coordinate their activities and draw up lists of demands to be presented to individual enterprises. The specific, local demands were then added to the general list of grievances. Behind the scenes, Gapon and his assistants worked feverishly, night and day, examining the various proposals and composing the final text of the petition. The draft in preparation was intended to be forwarded to the minister of the interior, as was the practice with the petitions of the liberals. The method of presenting the petition had been subject to considerable debate among the Assembly's leadership. There had been suggestions for a direct appeal to the tsar, and Gapon himself had often said that if the workers could get to the tsar and tell him of their woes, the tsar would certainly help them.<sup>71</sup> It had been standard practice in the Assembly to direct criticism of the regime against the

<sup>71</sup> For example, see *ibid.*, p. 203, and Pavlov, p. 88.

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corrupt bureaucrats, but never against the sovereign. Distant and omnipotent, the tsar was still an object of reverence for the majority of the membership, and their traditional monarchist sentiments were not shaken by the strike.

Gapon promised to have a draft of the petition ready in his apartment by 2:00 P.M. on Thursday. When Varnashev arrived to pick up the petition, he found Gapon in the company of several assistants (including Bogucharskii and Matiushenskii), still working on the draft. Gapon drew Varnashev aside and, in a whisper so as not to be heard by the others, asked, "Tell me, what do you think, would it not be better if we all were to go to deliver the petition? We will inform the tsar and the appropriate authorities that we will assemble on Sunday, let us say, at the Winter Palace, and that the people want to see the tsar and nobody else! What do you think?" Varnashev was stunned at first, but "after a couple of minutes, lowering our voices to a whisper, throwing short phrases back and forth, we were excitedly agreeing with each other."<sup>72</sup> Varnashev's testimony vividly captures the moment when the idea was born of delivering the petition *en masse*, but the workers in the branches had yet to be informed.

During the day Gapon contacted General Fullon, who did not object to the plan but was not as friendly toward the priest as he had been on previous occasions.<sup>73</sup> Alarmed by the momentum of events in the capital, Fullon was becoming somewhat suspicious of Gapon. That afternoon Gapon contacted the office of the minister of the interior for an appointment, but Sviatopolk-Mirskii refused to see him. Gapon tried to convey his concern for the seriousness of the situation, but the minister was not impressed. Other attempts to contact officials failed. In any case, Gapon was fuming with indignation when he arrived at the Narva Branch late that evening and told the assembled workers that the minister of the interior had refused to see him. He then launched into a bitter tirade against official indiffer-

<sup>72</sup> Varnashev, p. 204.

<sup>73</sup> Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 187.



ence and arbitrariness toward the workers. Saying that the only hope was to bring the workers' demands directly to the tsar, Gapon unveiled his new proposal: "Let us all go with our wives and our children to the Winter Palace on Sunday at 2:00 P.M. Let us go quietly and peacefully, and we will be heard."<sup>74</sup>

The idea of a mass appeal to the tsar immediately captured the imagination of the workers. It blended well with the traditional conservative orientation of the Russian masses and the image of the tsar as the father of his people—benevolent, but distant. The bureaucrats and officials had erected a wall between the tsar and his people, but if the wall were broken down, and the tsar knew of their misery, he would not fail to right the injustices. As one worker explained,

Everyone said: Let us go to the father and tell him how we suffer from those who fleece us. We will tell him: Father, hear us out. We came to you; help us, your children. We know that you would gladly sacrifice your life for us, and that you only live for us, but you do not know how we are beaten and how we suffer; how we are constantly weary; besides we are kept in ignorance, like cattle, almost all of us illiterate. . . . And we also said: Why, even in the New Testament it is said that the father took back his prodigal son, and we are not prodigal, we work very hard, almost killing ourselves, only to remain in hunger and suffering.<sup>75</sup>

Thus the campaign to organize a mass procession to the palace was begun. By the morning of January 7, almost the entire work force of St. Petersburg was on strike. Industry in the capital ground to a halt as the workers turned their eyes toward the Winter Palace. They were determined to seek the lofty monarch hidden behind its walls and recount their grievances before him.

<sup>74</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 319.

<sup>75</sup> Gurevich, p. 12.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Turn to Politics*

Russia is too vast, and her needs are too great and manifold to be dealt with exclusively by the bureaucrats. Popular representation is essential; it is essential that the people help themselves and govern themselves.

From the workers' petition of  
January ninth

The Putilov strike and the rapid spread of labor unrest in St. Petersburg came as a sudden surprise to educated Russian society. The largest Russian newspaper, *Novoe vremia*, in its long and detailed year-end review of issues facing Russia in 1905, did not even mention the working class or labor problems, and this at the time when the Putilov conflict had already reached an impasse. If educated society was surprised, the revolutionary intelligentsia, which seemed little aware of the influence Gapon and the Assembly had among the workers of the capital, was astonished. As might be expected, the strike immediately attracted the attention of all opposition elements, and particularly the revolutionary organizations. The Social Democrats, amazed at the militancy of the branch workers and the radical tone of their speeches, sensed the presence of the "spirit of Marx" (an expression used by Rosa Luxemburg) among the agitated masses. Yet they quickly discovered that Gapon and the Assembly held the masses of workers well under control and met the Social Democrats' attempts to usurp the leadership of the strike movement with polite but firm resistance. In addition, the Social Democratic party organization itself was so preoccupied with factional strife that it was incapable of united action.

In late 1904 the Social Democratic Party in St. Petersburg was feeling the effects of the split into Bolshevik and

Menshevik factions that had occurred at the Second Party Congress in 1903. The Bolshevik followers of Lenin controlled the St. Petersburg Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDRP), while the insurgent Menshevik elements, opposed to the centralizing policies of the Bolsheviks, organized a faction called "The St. Petersburg Group of the Central Committee of the RSDRP," or, as it was more commonly known, the "Group." The two factions were approximately equal in numbers, with a third, smaller group holding a conciliatory position between them. The split became open in the last days of November, exacerbated by the inept manner in which the Committee handled the attempted mass labor demonstration on November 28. The demonstration was an utter fiasco, with each faction blaming the other for its failure. All through December the two factions remonstrated with each other, until by the end of the month the Social Democrats were split into two distinct organizations. Preoccupied with internecine struggle, the party leadership devoted little time to the workers, many of whom became disillusioned by the continuous theoretical wranglings of the party intelligentsia.

The Putilov strike and the seemingly sudden emergence of the Assembly as the spokesman of the workers caught the party regulars off-guard. The report of the St. Petersburg Committee to the Third Party Congress contained the following evaluation of the situation: "The struggle with the Mensheviks completely disorganized the work of the St. Petersburg Committee. Workers often simply quit the organization without going over to the Mensheviks. . . . The January events found the St. Petersburg Committee in a deplorable state."<sup>1</sup> Even more explicit is the following letter, written on January 7, from St. Petersburg to the Bolshevik newspaper *Vpered*:

Only after coming face to face with the elemental upheaval of the strike fever that engulfed all plants, factories, and even small shops this day can we

<sup>1</sup> *Tretii s'ezd RSDRP*, pp. 544-545.

## THE TURN TO POLITICS

comprehend the full extent of party disorganization. The result is that we, the St. Petersburg organization, are completely powerless in the face of the spontaneous workers' movement. One needs only to go out on the street and see what is happening around him to understand how powerless we are.<sup>2</sup>

The Bolshevik historian V. Nevskii, who was in St. Petersburg at the beginning of 1905, concluded in his study that the party was sadly out of touch with the working masses; "The organization in the capital included literally only a paltry number of workers."<sup>3</sup> He calculated that even by the most optimistic estimates, the number of workers with party affiliation could hardly have included one-half of one percent of the working population.<sup>4</sup>

The Mensheviks were more oriented toward the mass movement, but their organization was as yet only incipient. One Menshevik leader, S. Somov (pseudonym of I. A. Peskin), left an account of his experiences as an organizer in the Neva district.<sup>5</sup> Finding only three circles of workers in operation in the district, Somov called a meeting on December 26. He had to wait four hours past the appointed time for a group of even ten ("our best workers in the Neva district") to be gathered so that the conference could get

<sup>2</sup> *Vpered*, no. 4 (January 31/18, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> Nevskii, *Rabochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84. See also V. Nevskii, "Peterburgskaia sotsial-demokraticheskaia organizatsiia," pp. 144-156. For further discussion of the Social Democratic organizations in St. Petersburg on the eve of 1905, see: Shelavin, "Peterburgskaia organizatsiia RSDRP," pp. 152-166; Doroshenko, "Rol' sotsial-demokraticheskoi organizatsii," pp. 206-219; Kuznetsova, "Stachechnaia bor'ba rabochikh Peterburga," pp. 11-25; and Lane, *The Roots of Russian Communism*, p. 68, which relies primarily on Soviet sources and consequently tends to inflate the Bolshevik strength and influence. For the Menshevik interpretation, see Somov, "Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticheskogo dvizheniia," and the analysis by Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, pp. 51ff.

<sup>5</sup> The party organizations in St. Petersburg were subdivided into "districts" (*raiony*) led by "district organizers" who supervised the work of "propagandists" conducting "circles of workers." See Lane, *Roots of Russian Communism*, p. 70, for an organizational chart of party structure in St. Petersburg.

under way. The assembled workers were very skeptical of the party and pessimistic about its future prospects. They did not see how workers could be recruited into an organization which, in their opinion, "was of little value, did not do anything, and had no plans to do anything."<sup>6</sup> According to Somov, the situation in other districts was no better. He blamed the St. Petersburg Committee for the disastrous state of affairs:

Factory life found absolutely no reflection in the circles. The silent fermentation, which began among the St. Petersburg proletariat and found its expression in the vigorously growing movement of Gapon, a clear sign of the striving of the working masses toward organization and class unification, was considered a remnant of *zubatovshchina* and ignored. *Furthermore the workers in our circles were mostly young, only recently graduated, apprentices, who had absolutely no influence among their fellow workers. The situation was even worse in the other districts.*<sup>7</sup>

The Social Democratic organizations in St. Petersburg completely failed to recognize, let alone come to terms with, the growth of the Assembly. The attitude of party functionaries toward the Assembly was dictated by a resolution of the Second Party Congress dealing with Zubatovite organizations.<sup>8</sup> The resolution called for continuous struggle against *zubatovshchina* and instructed party workers to try persistently to take over the leadership of all strikes started by Zubatovites. Some local party organizations and individuals made diligent efforts to carry out these instructions on their own. Social Democrats appeared from time to time in the branches, but their efforts to speak out against the Assembly and its leaders met with strong opposition from the

<sup>6</sup> Somov, pp. 25-26.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25. Emphasis added.

<sup>8</sup> Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Vtoroi s'ezd RSDRP*, p. 433.

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workers. One Bolshevik worker recalled how his local party circle made a foray into the neighborhood branch, where one of them attempted to speak. As soon as the speech became critical of the Assembly, the audience forced the speaker to stop and, as his companion recalled, "our comrade was compelled to leave the speaker's platform, accompanied by whistles from the entire audience."<sup>9</sup>

Although local party organizations made a few half-hearted attempts to oppose the Assembly, the central party organs made no serious efforts to infiltrate the Gaponovite organization. In late December of 1904, Lenin found it necessary to inform his followers in St. Petersburg of the existence of a Zubatovite organization and advised extreme caution in dealing with it.<sup>10</sup> The Menshevik Somov remembered first hearing of Gapon and his organization only on December 26. While waiting for the district meeting to start, Somov got into a conversation with the hostess, who was sympathetic to Social Democracy but advised him that the party was wasting time. She hinted that they might learn a lesson from a certain Father Gapon and his Assembly, who were really doing something for the working class, and she even suggested that Somov join the Assembly if he wanted to help the workers. Taken aback, Somov confessed, "To my shame, I must admit that I found out about the truly widespread influence of Gapon's organization for the first time from her."<sup>11</sup> A prominent Bolshevik, D. Sverchkov, was similarly oblivious to new currents among the workers of St. Petersburg. Sverchkov wrote, "I was working in the city and Neva districts, and the turning point toward *gaponovshchina* in the labor movement remained imperceptible to me."<sup>12</sup>

Events quickly outdistanced the unprepared Social Democrats, and the party organizations were hard put to devise

<sup>9</sup> Tikhomirov, "Ot bunta na koleniakh—k vooruzhennomu voss-taniu," p. 6. See also Sokolovskaia, "Neskol'ko strochek vospominanii," pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> Lenin, "Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s S. I. Gusevym," *PR*, no. 3 (38), 1925, pp. 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Somov, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Sverchkov, *Na zare revoliutsii*, p. 53.

a policy to deal with such an unprecedented, spontaneous outburst of labor unrest. A Bolshevik functionary recalled frantic policy discussions, the sense of futility in the face of a rapidly evolving situation, and the final decision that the best policy was to wait and let events themselves determine the plan of action.<sup>13</sup> Somov appraised the situation as follows: "Our organization as a whole was not functioning during those days, and each district acted on its own. Besides, the events so surprised us that when the Group met, only two days before the ninth, it was already too late to formulate our tactics."<sup>14</sup> The Social Democratic leaders abroad found out what was happening in St. Petersburg from the foreign press before their local party officers relayed news of developments. When news of the Putilov strike broke, N. Krupskaja, the wife and close assistant of Lenin, wrote from Geneva to the secretary of the Bolshevik Committee in St. Petersburg, S. I. Gusev, asking for information. Her letter expressed deep concern: "We are finding out there is a strike at the Putilov Works. Do we have any contacts there? Will we not be able to get any information about the strike?"<sup>15</sup>

When the strike began, the central party organization instructed party members to infiltrate the branches, expose Gapon and the Assembly leadership as police agents, and gain control of the strike. All accounts of party members who tried to carry out these instructions document the futility of open opposition to the Assembly. One party member recalled how he and his fellow workers tried several times, but found that "not a single orator had an opportunity to complete his speech. Even their attempts to continue speaking created a pogromist mood among the Gaponovites."<sup>16</sup> Sverchkov, the Bolshevik, wrote:

After receiving news of the growth of the Gaponovite organization, the Social Democratic Party directed its

<sup>13</sup> V. Lifshits, "Poslednii den' very v tsaria," p. 279.

<sup>14</sup> Somov, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in Nevskii, *Rabochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> Goncharov, "Ianvarskie dni 1905 goda v Peterburge," p. 145.

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best people to the Narva district. But it was already too late. The Social Democrats were allowed to speak at meetings until they criticized Gapon. Then whistles, shouts of "enough" and "out" would drown out the speaker and force him to withdraw. . . . Soon it became completely impossible for us to speak at the meetings. It was enough to call oneself a Social Democrat to be denied the right to speak.<sup>17</sup>

The attitude of the regular Social Democratic organizations in St. Petersburg was reflected in leaflets issued during the strike.<sup>18</sup> The Mensheviks put out the first leaflet on January 3, and its general tone was rigidly opposed to Gapon.<sup>19</sup> The Bolsheviks issued their first leaflet on January 5 in a small edition of seven hundred copies addressed to the Putilov workers. It was a long tirade against capitalists, particularly the management of the Putilov plant and its director, Smirnov. The leaflet even made a curious reference to the Assembly as "our Assembly," a claim which was not pursued later by Soviet historians.<sup>20</sup> On January 8 the Bolsheviks issued another leaflet denouncing the proposed appeal to the tsar and calling instead for the complete overthrow of the regime.<sup>21</sup> As Nevskii, an active participant in the events, observed, these leaflets had no effect on the workers in St. Petersburg.<sup>22</sup>

While the regular Social Democratic organizations main-

<sup>17</sup> Sverchkov, pp. 53-54. See also the accounts of Doroshenko, "Rol' sotsial-demokraticheskoi organizatsii," p. 211; and of Lenin's sister, A. Elizarova-Ulianova, "Moi vospominaniia," and "Iz proshlogo," p. 87.

<sup>18</sup> The most complete list of Social Democratic leaflets issued during the January days (both Menshevik and Bolshevik) is in *1905 god v Peterburge*: vol. 1: *Sotsial-demokraticheskie listovki* (Leningrad-Moscow, 1925). Bolshevik leaflets appeared in numerous collections; of these, the most convenient are: *Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, Listovki bol'shevitskikh organizatsii*, and *1905*.

<sup>19</sup> *1905 god v Peterburge*, pp. 10-12. Even the leaflet issued on the eve of the march was still anti-Gapon; see *ibid.*, p. 21, and the discussion of leaflets in Schwarz, pp. 65-68.

<sup>20</sup> *1905*, document 8, pp. 10-11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, document 30, pp. 40-41.

<sup>22</sup> Nevskii, *Rabochee dvizhenie v ianuarskie dni*, pp. 72-73.



tained their hostile attitude toward Gapon and his Assembly, local party circles and scattered individuals were drawn by the excitement of the spontaneous upheaval. Lacking the centralized discipline of the Bolshevik organization, the Mensheviks were more adept at adjusting to the Gaponovite approach. Their flexibility and willingness to tone down their opposition to Gapon gave them an opportunity to take an active part in the branches, where the help of experienced labor organizers was sorely needed. Somov explained the involvement of the Mensheviks in the newly established Neva Branch of the Assembly in part by the weakness of the Menshevik organization. The Mensheviks in the Neva district, drawn into the Gaponovite struggle, "hardly could think of using this gigantic movement in the interests of their practically nonexistent organization."<sup>23</sup> Somov has left a vivid description of his first visit to the Neva Branch on the fourth or fifth of January and the impression the simple, passionate speeches of the workers there made on him. As had been previously decided, one of his companions agreed to make a speech in favor of including political demands in the scope of the strike. The speech, though less radical than originally intended, seemed strangely out of place:

Several seconds of embarrassed silence followed his speech. Then the chairman, who was generally hostile to Social Democrats, apparently not wishing to finish off an already broken and harmless adversary, softly and very politely remarked that all the previous speaker had said concerning the necessity of political reforms was undoubtedly true and good, but he wished that the workers could have an opportunity to work in peace and little by little in time they will discuss everything by themselves. After this, the flow of simple but intense speeches continued as before. One crowd was replaced by another; outside the entrance to the branch there were even larger meetings, and the mood

<sup>23</sup> Somov, p. 33.

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became increasingly elated until finally we could no longer resist and gave in to the general spirit. Instead of our former criticism of *gaponovshchina*, our speakers, with striking descriptions of the intolerable conditions of the workers, appealed for all-out struggle on all fronts to put an end to this. In short, we began spouting speeches in a spirit entirely inspired by the frenzied mood of the crowd although with more content than those of the Gaponovites. From that time on the influence of Social Democratic speakers increased, and the crowds listened to them willingly, not comprehending at all in what ways they differed from the Gaponovites. Many even called them "Gapon's Social Democrats," and were firmly convinced that the Gaponovite branches had specially appointed officers called "Social Democrats."<sup>24</sup>

Some ambitious Social Democrats devised ingenious methods to gain access to the crowds in the branches. Sverchkov recalled a trick used by one friend while delivering speeches in the branches. He would preface all his statements with the words, "Father Gapon said," although of course Father Gapon never had said any such thing.<sup>25</sup> Another Bolshevik speaker, the student Sukhov, learned to literally repeat Gapon's speeches word for word, "involuntarily reproducing all Gapon's gestures, imitating his intonation, speaking with his southern accent . . . if you closed your eyes, you heard and saw Gapon in front of you. . . ."<sup>26</sup> Social Democrats who were willing to go along with the movement were acceptable to the leaders of the Assembly. The rapid spread of the strike, which stretched the Assembly's leadership capacities to its limits, and the more radical stance of the striking workers made the leaders of the Assembly welcome additional organizers. The only requirement for access to activity in the branches was support for

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>25</sup> Sverchkov, pp. 54-55.

<sup>26</sup> Gimer, "9 ianvaria 1905 g. v S. Peterburge. Vospominaniia," p. 4.

Gapon and his plans. Having adjusted to these conditions, Somov's group found that

... the assistants of Gapon, who were hostile at first ... became dependent on us, since they felt themselves uneasy in the field of political agitation. Later they told us our previous speeches to the crowds had sounded foolish, but once we adopted their methods and their style of influencing the masses, we so improved the content of our speeches that now they had to learn from us.<sup>27</sup>

Although at first the Social Democrats had hoped to take over the Assembly, their leaders soon became fearful that the powerful appeal of the Gaponovites might sweep all other parties aside. Even before the Putilov strike, the Assembly was making steady inroads into the ranks of Social Democratic workers, who were unhappy with the organizational wranglings of the leading party intelligentsia. Gapon's charismatic appeal and unquestioned authority impressed them. The Bolshevik Gusev lamented to Lenin, "Not only old workers, but even conscious Social Democratic workers, even organized workers, furthermore some intelligentsia from Social Democratic organizations assume that Father Gapon is an 'idealist.'" <sup>28</sup> Lenin's sister wrote of her friend, Social Democrat P. V. Balashov, that he was so taken with Father Gapon and his movement that he "dove with complete confidence into the murky waters of Gaponovite agitation and became a member of a local branch."<sup>29</sup> The Social Democratic regulars, who at the beginning of the strike did not consider a priest leading a police-sponsored labor organization much competition, had to revise

<sup>27</sup> Somov, pp. 35-37.

<sup>28</sup> From a letter from Gusev to Lenin, in 1905, document 7, p. 9. It is dated incorrectly in this collection. It could not have been written on January 5, because it mentions the march to the palace, which was announced publicly for the first time on January 6, as well as the strike at Obukhov plant, which occurred on January 7.

<sup>29</sup> Elizarova-Ulianova, "Iz proshlogo," p. 87.

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their views. Although the militant mood of the workers in the branches had given the Social Democrats confidence that they would be able to direct the strike movement, they soon realized that Gapon and the Assembly program had broad support from all segments of the working class in St. Petersburg, not just from the Assembly membership. Gusev later wrote:

Even on the third [and] fourth the Committee felt it would be able to gain control over the movement since Gapon was becoming more revolutionary with each hour under the influence of the working masses. The estimates of the Committee were incorrect, and already by the fifth [and] sixth the Committee had to admit that the movement was slipping out of the party's control.<sup>30</sup>

Although the direct influence of the Social Democrats was negligible, the Gaponovite movement clearly showed how deeply the ideas of Social Democracy and the labor movement struggle were ingrained in the workers. The Assembly, in addition to providing the organizational framework for mobilizing the workers, had given the workers an opportunity to discuss these ideas, reducing them to easily graspable concepts expressed in traditionally acceptable forms. The Social Democrats, surprised by the radicalism of the workers' demands and euphorically ascribing this to their own influence, were surprised to discover that the workers did not want or need Social Democratic tutelage to draw up their own radical slogans. The most significant characteristic of the Gaponovite movement was the workers' stubborn resolve to pursue their own goals independently, rejecting the leadership of organized revolutionary parties. Lenin eventually characterized the January days correctly as "history created by the working masses without Social Democracy."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Gusev, "Vokrug 9-go ianvaria."

<sup>31</sup> Lenin in *Vpered*, no. 4; see *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, p. 218.

Soviet historiography in general, particularly since the 1930's, has consistently minimized and blackened the role of Gapon. Contrary to Lenin's evaluation, Social Democrats were proclaimed the true leaders of the movement. With countless variations, Soviet historians have portrayed Bolshevik speakers as denouncing Gapon at branch meetings and, with the support of the workers, compelling the reluctant priest to include radical demands in his petition. The workers supposedly supported the Social Democratic demands against Gapon's wishes. The most vulgarized versions have depicted Gapon as a simple *agent provocateur*, who conspired with the police to lead the working masses, fallen under the influence of revolutionaries, to a premeditated massacre.<sup>32</sup>

In reality the radical demands in the petition were a direct legacy of the secret Program-of-the-Five. For many months the Assembly leadership used this program as the basis for discussions in the branches, emphasizing the necessity of attaining its basic provisions, including an eight-hour work day and elementary political and civil rights. All through November and December the idea of a workers' petition was circulated among the membership and hotly debated within the leadership. Although the idea of the petition was generally accepted, the specific demands, particularly political demands, remained controversial. In discussions with the radical wing of the Liberationists, the Kuskova-Prokopovich group, the demand for a national representative body was the main bone of contention. Since Gapon was not able to obtain agreement among his assistants during the fall, the question of what to include in the petition was unresolved at the time of the Putilov crisis.

With the beginning of the Putilov dispute, the supporters of the petition urgently pressed Gapon to issue a general statement of workers' grievances. At first Gapon demurred, not wishing to complicate the immediate issues in the dis-

<sup>32</sup> See Stalin's *Istoriia Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov)*, pp. 54-55. A less distorted version is repeated in the current Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Istoriia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, vol. II, pp. 23-24.

pute by introducing a general petition which might have political implications. Since he hoped to persuade the city governor and other officials to use their influence on the Putilov management, he was not in favor of alienating them with such a petition at that time. When Gapon called the leadership of the branches together for a meeting at the start of the Putilov dispute (December 27, according to Karelin), the issue of the petition provoked a heated exchange. Karelin, arguing for its submission, felt that this action would clear the Assembly of the stigma of Zubatovism once and for all and gain broad support among the workers. Others objected, preferring to wait for another time. The final vote was tied, and the deciding vote lay with Gapon. This placed him in a difficult situation. In the past Gapon had strongly advocated the petition, but now he found himself opposing his former supporters on this issue. Despite his reservations, Gapon opted for the submission of a petition, remarking, "Well, if you want to break the bank, then let us go ahead!"<sup>33</sup>

Thus the Assembly made two important commitments on December 27: to fight the Putilov management until the successful conclusion of the dispute and (by a bare majority) to support the submission of a workers' petition. For several days the Putilov dispute occupied everyone's attention and energies. At first there was no attempt to change the local character of the issues involved. When the Putilov workers went out on strike, the list of demands was lengthened to include some general ones, such as an eight-hour work day, but only those of strictly economic concern. The development of the strike into a mass movement, however, made necessary the drawing up of a general set of demands for the entire working class of St. Petersburg. Gapon avoided announcing all at once the full text of the already

<sup>33</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 111, gives the number of participants as eighty (including Finkel'). Petrov, in *Vsemirnyi vestnik*, no. 1, 1907, pp. 42-44, describes a meeting similar in particulars to the one described by Karelin, but reports the attendance as twenty-one. In his memoirs Gapon credits himself with the initiative of presenting a petition, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 85.

existing Program-of-the-Five; instead he escalated the demands gradually as the scope of the strike widened.

Once it became obvious that negotiations with the Putilov management had failed, Gapon no longer had any reason to avoid alienating government officials. The advantages of taking a strong stand and attracting support from additional opposition elements overcame whatever reservations he had, and Gapon began showing the Program-of-the-Five to a number of individuals with different political leanings. On the morning of the fifth, Gapon and Petrov made the rounds of newspaper offices showing the program to the editors and explaining that it was the basic outline of a workers' petition being prepared for submission to the authorities. Always eager for publicity, Gapon asked the papers to send their reporters to the branch meetings. He gave Stroev a copy and also discussed the petition with Matiushenskii, the reporter who had been present at the Putilov board meeting. Gapon solicited recommendations from a broad range of interested groups and individuals, even asking several friends to draw up drafts of the proposed petition. As a result, when the petition appeared in its final form, many were ready to claim it as their own work.

Indeed, the authorship of the petition has long been a disputed issue. Gapon claimed sole responsibility for its contents, as did Matiushenskii, although no one took the latter claim seriously. The Social Democrats usually attributed it to themselves although a noted Soviet historian, M. N. Pokrovskii, concluded that the petition was influenced by the liberals,<sup>34</sup> and still another Soviet historian asserted that it was the product of the collective efforts of the working masses.<sup>35</sup> The confusion was deepened by conflicting press accounts published abroad. Both factions of the Social Democrats were anxious to claim credit for the radical demands in the petition, and articles in Lenin's *Vpered* and

<sup>34</sup> M. N. Pokrovskii, *Istoriia Rossii v samom szhatom ocherke*, pp. 359-360.

<sup>35</sup> Ainzaf, *Zubatovshchina i gaponovshchina*, pp. 146ff.

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Menshevik *Iskra* reflected the ambitions of local party correspondents more than the actual events in the capital.

On the evening of January fifth, for example, Stroev visited the Neva Branch, where workers had gathered to collect signatures under a petition. In the absence of Gapon and the branch chairman, Petrov, the gathering degenerated into confusion. Some workers, encouraged by the Social Democrats, who were particularly active in the Neva Branch, favored proceeding with the meeting. Others objected to the interference of outsiders, demanding the meeting not start until Petrov arrived. Since Stroev had a copy of the demands, given to him by Gapon earlier that day, he was invited to read them. To his surprise, although most of the workers were already familiar with the proposals, they did not like hearing them from an outsider. In his later testimony to the police, Stroev claimed to have criticized the proposals of Gapon and gotten into an argument with the workers.<sup>36</sup> In any case, Gapon and Petrov soon arrived to restore order. They read the outline of the petition and began collecting signatures. Once satisfied that the proposals were Gapon's, the workers enthusiastically accepted them. While a correspondent of the Menshevik paper *Iskra* denounced Stroev and his proposals as emanating from his collaboration with "Petersburg liberals,"<sup>37</sup> the account in the Bolshevik *Vpered* informed its readers that this particular meeting was controlled by the Social Democrats and that Stroev presented a resolution drafted by them.<sup>38</sup>

On the basis of the information supplied him by his followers in St. Petersburg, Lenin stated that Gapon's petition fully corresponded to the program-minimum of the Social

<sup>36</sup> See the Okhrana report on the interrogation of Stroev, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 216-217. See also the account in Petrov, *op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>37</sup> *Iskra*, no. 84. In some Soviet sources the Stroev mentioned by Lenin has been identified as a party regular, V. A. Desnitskii from Nizhnii Novgorod, who used the party name "Stroev."

<sup>38</sup> Lenin in *Vpered*, no. 4, and in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, p. 222.



Democratic Party. In this case Lenin was quoting Gusev verbatim. Many years later Gusev had an opportunity to elaborate on this statement when he provided editorial comments on his correspondence with Lenin and Krupskaya. He explained that the source of his information was a member of the Committee, P. Rumiantsev, who

... was assigned the task of maintaining unofficial contact with Gapon. He daily visited Gaponovite meetings and informed me that a group of Bolshevik students has managed to substitute (*udalos' podmenit'*) for the text of Gapon's petition another one containing all the political demands of the program-minimum of Social Democracy. This is why the term "fully correspond to the program-minimum" was used here.<sup>39</sup>

According to Gapon, the text of the petition evolved from the Program-of-the-Five in the following manner. Arriving home at a late hour of the fifth of January, he found several acquaintances and journalists, including a representative of an English paper, waiting for him. In his own words, "I asked my friends to compose a draft of the petition which would include all the points of our program. None of their drafts satisfied me, but later I myself composed the petition on the basis of these drafts."<sup>40</sup> We do not know all the individuals who were involved, but no doubt several drafts were prepared, and there were long discussions over the various provisions. Available sources suggest that the liberals of the Kuskova-Prokopovich-Bogucharskii group, who had close contacts with Gapon at certain periods, were influential in persuading him to support the demand for a national representative body, but the resolution they pre-

<sup>39</sup> Editorial notes of Gusev to "Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s S. I. Gusevym," note 11, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 85. Gapon gives January 5 as the date the petition was written, and says that was the last night he spent in his apartment. Actually the last night he spent in his apartment was the sixth, and it was then that the petition was composed.

pared found no reflection in the final draft of the petition.<sup>41</sup> This final draft, called the "Tsar's Charter" in the English original of Gapon's autobiography, bore the clear imprint of Gapon's style and training. It was the Program-of-the-Five with a long introduction, a brief conclusion, and the demand for popular representation added.

The petition, written in simple language and conventional rhetorical style, had the suppliant tone of a religious invocation.<sup>42</sup> Although the intelligentsia scoffed at its peculiar form and the naive, often contradictory demands expressed in the strange prose of a priest, the working masses were moved to frenzied exaltation upon hearing it. Gapon knew his audience well and spoke in a language born to touch their deepest frustrations and dearest hopes. Karelin commented, "This style of Gapon's was truly unusual. It was simple, clear, precise, and grabbed you by the heart, just like his voice."<sup>43</sup> The petition, some copies of which were entitled "The Most Humble and Loyal Address," began as a supplication to the sovereign:

Sire:

We, the workers of St. Petersburg, our wives, our children, and our aged, helpless parents, come to Thee, O Sire, to seek justice and protection. We are impoverished; we are oppressed, overburdened with excessive toil, contemptuously treated. We are not even recognized as human beings, but are treated like slaves who must suffer their bitter lot in silence and without complaint.

<sup>41</sup> Gapon continued to consult some of the liberals and asked Bogucharskii to edit his petition. Bogucharskii instead drew up his own resolution, which in all probability he sent to *Osvobozhdenie*, where it was published in issue no. 65 (January 27/February 9, 1905), pp. 244-245. This "resolution," as it was called, is frequently attributed to the authorship of an unidentified Social Democrat, and it was probably the one read by Stroeve at the Neva Branch; see Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii,'" p. 27. See also the comments of Bogucharskii (under the pseudonym NN) in editorial notes to Pavlov, pp. 91-92.

<sup>42</sup> See the discussion in Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii,'" p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 111.

... O Sire, we have no strength left, and our endurance is at an end. We have reached that frightful moment when death is better than the prolongation of our unbearable sufferings.

The petition then explained the causes of the workers' plight and asked:

O Sire, is this in accordance with God's laws, by the grace of which Thou reignest? Is it possible to live under such laws? Would it not be preferable for all of us, the toiling masses of Russia, to die? Let the capitalists and officials, the embezzlers and plunderers of the Russian people, live and enjoy their lives.

The workers called on the tsar:

... Do not turn Thy help from Thy people. Lead them out from the grave of lawlessness, poverty, and ignorance. Allow them to determine their own future; deliver them from the intolerable oppression of the officialdom. Raze the wall that separates Thee from Thy people and rule the country with them. ...

The call for some form of popular representation was put forth as the main demand, followed by an oblique reference to a constituent assembly. After this principal request, "upon which everything else depends," followed the listing of grievances, a straight Program-of-the-Five.<sup>44</sup> The Petition concluded with a desperate plea:

<sup>44</sup> Gapon's assistants maintained that the whole Program-of-the-Five was included in the first version of the petition as the list of specific demands. See Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 107; Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei," p. 198; Pavlov, "Iz vospominanii o rabochem soiuze," p. 90. This is corroborated by two accounts of the origin of the petition based on personal interviews with Gapon's lieutenants: Sviatlovskii, *Professional'noe dvizhenie rabochikh*, pp. 90-91, and Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii,'" p. 20.

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Issue orders and swear to fulfill them, and Thou wilt make Russia happy and glorious, and Thy name will forever be engraved in our hearts and in the hearts of all our descendants. But if Thou withholdest Thy command and failest to respond to our supplications, we will die here on this square before Thy palace. There is no place for us to go, nor is there any reason for us to go any further. There are two paths before us: one to freedom and happiness, the other into the grave. Sire, show us either of them and we will follow it, even if it leads us to death. Let our lives be a sacrifice for suffering Russia. We do not regret this sacrifice, but offer it willingly.<sup>45</sup>

According to Varnashev, the final draft of the petition was ready the evening of the sixth, although Gapon claimed he worked on the text that night.<sup>46</sup> Gapon probably gave Varnashev a draft of the nearly completed petition and made minor revisions in the next few hours. On the morning of the seventh the first full version began circulating through the branches. Gapon made the rounds of the branches, reading the petition from the original copy, which he carried with him, and frequently working on it. Late in the afternoon he edited the final draft with the help of several members of the intelligentsia, including Matiushenskii. According to Ianov, Matiushenskii gave the beginning and the conclusion a more literary style, but the demands written by Gapon were left unchanged.<sup>47</sup> The assistants who accompanied Gapon repeatedly stated that Matiushenskii's contribution was limited to smoothing over a bit two or three clumsy expressions.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The full text of the petition is given in Appendix II.

<sup>46</sup> Varnashev, p. 205.

<sup>47</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 319.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Kharitonov in Pavlov, pp. 90-91; and Karelin, who wrote, "The basic provisions in it were ours. Maybe something was added by Finkel'shtein [should be Finkel'] or maybe by someone from the parties, but I definitely believe that the final version belongs to Gapon" ("Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 111).

In the course of the day a number of important changes were made. The final version of the petition broadened its appeal by addressing the tsar not only in the name of the workers of St. Petersburg, but also on behalf of all the city's inhabitants and "the entire toiling class of Russia." The attack on the bureaucracy was worded in considerably stronger language, reflecting worsening relations between Gapon and the authorities.<sup>49</sup> One section singled out the factory inspectorate (the principal villain in the Putilov dispute) and demanded its abolition. Some demands brought out by the Putilov strike were added, as well as two new ones calling for an end to the war in the Far East and the placement of armaments contracts in Russia. The most radical new demand, separation of Church and State, was apparently motivated by Gapon's growing difficulties with the ecclesiastical authorities and his discussions with members of the progressive clergy.<sup>50</sup> In its final form, the petition was permeated by a spirit of urgency. Responding to increasing pressure from enthusiastic workers, the petition called for the immediate fulfillment of several demands. In the final form the petition emerged as an outgrowth of the Program-of-the-Five with the addition of political demands for a popular representative body.

The completed draft was taken to a typist late on the evening of January seventh. One copy was to be sent to the emperor and another to the minister of the interior; copies were also made for each branch. The original, containing the workers' signatures, was to be carried by Gapon, and trusted individuals were given additional copies for safe-

<sup>49</sup> Some of the additions to the final text, especially this particular section, are different in style and wording from the rest of the petition and were probably inserted by those who helped Gapon with the editing.

<sup>50</sup> Inclusion of these demands must have been motivated by Gapon's attitude toward the church. Karelina recalled that representatives of the progressive clergy had spoken to Gapon, and she believed that they had persuaded him to insert this demand (see the unpublished recollections of Karelina, cited in Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petsitsii,'" p. 35). Lenin also believed that the progressive clergy had had an influence on Gapon (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, p. 211).

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keeping.<sup>51</sup> The press was given a copy of the text that night, and the Reuter Agency dispatch of the petition was dated 11:20 P.M. Once the petition had been completed, the course of action was irrevocably set. The branches continued their incessant campaign to collect signatures and convince workers to join the march to the palace. Gapon, freed from the task of writing, set about to consolidate as much support behind him as possible. Cautiously he began to seek an understanding with the revolutionaries, allowing them to speak at branch meetings provided that their speeches were restrained and did not criticize his plan. Fearing a split in the workers' movement, Gapon was anxious to avoid any open confrontation with the revolutionaries. He hoped to neutralize their opposition and prevent any disruptive activities during the procession by consenting to their limited participation in the preparations. When an outside speaker wanted to address the crowd at a meeting, he had to obtain permission from the branch chairman and promise not to call the workers to arms. Even so, one Social Democrat found his speech interrupted by Gapon, once when he first identified himself as a party member, and again when he began to talk of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Gapon intervened to instruct the audience, reminding them that "the demonstration to the Palace must be peaceful, in no case should anyone carry weapons. . . . It is essential for all to see that this is not a revolutionary movement, but a peaceful procession to the tsar."<sup>52</sup> At a meeting on January sixth, when a Social Democrat called on the workers to unite under the "banner of Social Democracy," Gapon retorted:

Gentlemen, Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries: I have always respected you and considered

<sup>51</sup> See the account of Vengerova, to whom Karelina gave a copy for safekeeping, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaia, *Pervaia ruskaia revoliutsiia*, pp. 34-37. The original with Gapon's signature has been preserved. The lists of signatures were kept by the historian N. P. Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, but apparently were lost after his death in 1907. See Semanov, *Krovavoe voskresen'e*, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> Iaroslavskii, *Pravda*, January 22, 1925.

you honest people. I bow to you, I bow low to you: do not bring friction into our movement. Let us go under one united banner of peace towards our sacred goal.<sup>53</sup>

On the seventh of January, Father Gapon asked to meet in private with the representatives of the revolutionary parties. He spent the evening in the Neva district and met with Somov and some members of the Menshevik group, but his efforts to meet with representatives of all the revolutionary parties apparently failed. He did not meet with official representatives of the Bolsheviks or the Socialist Revolutionaries although the Bolshevik leader, Gusev, waited for him until late that evening in the apartment of Petr Rutenberg, a Socialist Revolutionary.<sup>54</sup> Gusev was not eager to meet with Gapon, but he was following the directive of the St. Petersburg Committee to seek an agreement with the priest. Gusev considered the effort useless and was probably not surprised when Gapon failed to appear.<sup>55</sup> While waiting, Gusev silently listened as Rutenberg, an engineer and ex-Social Democrat formerly employed at the Putilov Works, "in all matters sang fanatical praises to the genius and revolutionary inclinations of Gapon."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Gurevich, pp. 13-14.

<sup>54</sup> Petrov (pp. 50-51) stated that Gapon met on January 7 with representatives of the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats. Although Gapon may have talked with individuals who identified themselves as party members, these were not official party representatives. It is not clear whether Rutenberg was to represent the Socialist Revolutionaries at the meeting or simply provide an apartment for the use of Gusev and Gapon. The Socialist Revolutionaries on the whole went along with Gapon's proposals, but they did not play an important role in the movement. The party organ summarized: "The first thing that attracts the eye is the extremely minor role of the Socialist Revolutionaries in the movement" ("Nekotorye uroki ianvar'skikh dnei," *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* [hereafter cited as *RR*], no. 59 [February 10, 1905], p. 2).

<sup>55</sup> Gusev was directed to meet with Gapon and try to take over the movement. He wrote: "I considered such an attempt useless . . ." ("Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s S. I. Gusevym," p. 71). Bolshevik Doroshenko was present at the meeting of the committee that evening, and he later wrote: "If my memory does not betray me, Comrade Gusev informed us of his meeting with Gapon." The meeting, however, did not bring any results. See Doroshenko, p. 214.

<sup>56</sup> "Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s S. I. Gusevym," p. 71.

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Meanwhile Father Gapon and some of his followers were conferring with Mensheviks from the Neva district—"Gapon's Social Democrats"—including Somov and Ludwig Gerb (sometimes Gerby).<sup>57</sup> The Gaponovites were at first rather hostile, demanding to know why the Social Democrats had treated them with such contempt in the past and labeled them "Zubatovites." It took some time to smooth the ruffled feathers, and Gapon tried his best to calm the visitors by heaping praise on the revolutionaries. With tensions somewhat reduced, the two groups set forth their positions. The Social Democrats had come to dissuade Gapon from his plan. Gapon, on the other hand, was firmly set on carrying out his intentions, with the support of the Social Democrats or without it. Whenever the Menshevik conferees pointed to the inevitability of a bloody confrontation, Gapon insistently replied, "They will not dare!"

Gapon proposed that the Social Democrats march in the rear of the procession, to keep up the spirits of the crowd, and refrain from any antigovernment actions that might ruin the peaceful, loyalist character of the demonstration. If the tsar refused an audience, the Social Democrats would be free to act as they pleased, and the workers would join them on the barricades to make a revolution. When pressed on this point, Gapon answered in hazy generalities. He naively believed that his personal appeal to the workers would be sufficient to overthrow the regime right then and there. But Gapon showed little interest in pursuing the subject. Dismissing the possibility of failure, he preferred instead to describe in great detail a triumphant scenario.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Gerb wrote extensive accounts of his participation in the work of the Neva Branch in *Iskra* (nos. 85 and 86). He subsequently went on speaking tours and wrote more accounts. The present author had an opportunity to interview Mr. Gerb in the company of Solomon M. Schwarz in New York. The transcript of the interview was deposited with the Inter-University Project on the Menshevik Movement, Russian Institute, Columbia University, New York.

<sup>58</sup> Somov, p. 39. Gapon thought that the tsar would accept the petition from the delegation, and then, he hoped, would appear with him on the balcony. There Gapon would wave the white flag and, as the celebrations began, would become the great deliverer of Russia.



Gapon informed his visitors that he was willing to compromise and would be satisfied if the government agreed to the release of political prisoners and the convocation of an assembly (*zemskii sobor*) with legislative powers. The immediate establishment of an eight-hour work day would also be necessary in order to give the workers ample time to prepare themselves for participation in the political life of the country. Amazed that Gapon sincerely expected to receive such concessions from the tsar, Somov wrote:

This mixture of naiveté, childish chimeras, and realistic observations which testified to a penetrating knowledge of the workers' thoughts constituted the complete plan . . . of this mysterious first leader of the proletarian masses of St. Petersburg.<sup>59</sup>

The Social Democrats again tried to dissuade Gapon, but their arguments failed to move him. They were able to shake his confidence in the successful outcome of the march somewhat, but not his determination to proceed with the demonstration on Sunday. They left late at night, as Gerb remembered, "with an oppressing feeling of helplessness before the approaching events."<sup>60</sup>

While Gerb privately admitted his frustration, the information he and his comrades supplied to the Menshevik central organization conveyed the impression that the Social Democrats were completely taking over and directing the Gaponovite movement. The day following the meeting between the Somov group and Gapon, a Menshevik correspondent euphorically wrote: "In three days we turned Gaponovite gatherings into political meetings. We conquered the hall and chaired the meetings. All the Gaponov-

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> Gerb (under the pseudonym Baian), in the *Novaia rabochaia gazeta* of January 9, 1914. Despite the Social Democrats' opposition to the demonstration, Gerb made numerous speeches at the Neva Branch in support of the march. When asked about this seeming contradiction, he exclaimed, "Yes, yes, I had to do that, otherwise I would not have been allowed to speak. . . ."

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vites, leaders and masses, in our district are on our side. Tomorrow we are going in a great crowd from the whole district with a petition."<sup>61</sup> Gerb wrote two very long descriptions published in *Iskra* (nos. 85 and 86), grossly exaggerating the role of the Social Democrats in radicalizing the Assembly.<sup>62</sup>

The other revolutionary papers scoffed at the Menshevik claims. The organ of the Jewish Bund, unequivocally rejecting the Social Democrats' ambitious claims, accused *Iskra* of "attempting to shade the unpleasant fact of the existence in St. Petersburg of an influential organization which was pushing Social Democracy aside."<sup>63</sup> The Socialist Revolutionary newspaper treated the *Iskra* accounts with biting sarcasm: "It is true and no secret to anyone now that the accounts in *Iskra* could be approached better from the point of view of the psychology of creative writing than as any reflection of reality."<sup>64</sup>

The Bolshevik position was somewhat ambiguous. Gusev in St. Petersburg was uncompromisingly anti-Gapon and very pessimistic about Bolshevik prospects for overcoming the influence of the "police agent" priest. His letters to Lenin in Geneva reflected these views, but Lenin wanted to enhance the overall position of his organization by combatting the Menshevik claims. Lenin carefully edited Gusev's letters and added information from other sources, arriving at a picture of the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg pursuing a correct policy and actively participating in the movement.<sup>65</sup> In Gusev's opinion, Lenin was all too concilia-

<sup>61</sup> From a Menshevik leaflet published by the editors of *Iskra*: "Revoliutsionnye dni: Iz materialov *Iskry*" (no date).

<sup>62</sup> Nevskii commented, "The Mensheviks tried at a later date to prove that the 'St. Petersburg Group of TsK' played an important role in the movement: at least this thought shines through the account in no. 86 of *Iskra*" (*Rabochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, p. 93).

<sup>63</sup> "Nekotorye itogi ianvarskikh sobytii," *Poslednie izvestia*, no. 214, (February 19/March 4, 1905), pp. 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> "G. Gapon i russkaia sotsial-demokratiia," *RR*, no. 62 (March 25, 1905); see also "Nekotorye uroki ianvarskikh dnei," *RR*, no. 59 (February 1905).

<sup>65</sup> See the discussion by Schwarz (pp. 70-74), who noted that letters

tory toward Gapon and too willing to condone the Assembly movement as a future ally of Social Democracy.<sup>66</sup>

In general, the impressions emanating from the central organs of both Social Democratic factions were considerably more optimistic than the situation in St. Petersburg warranted. The revolutionaries who refused to go along with Gapon found themselves increasingly isolated as Gapon's authority became ever more deeply entrenched. A recent English historian summarized the role of the Social Democrats in the January days as follows:

In general, the Social Democrats exercised little influence. The most that could be said is that the Party agitators, acting to a large extent on their own initiative, did share in heating the atmosphere in the streets prior to the ninth of January.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, while behind the scenes the Social Democratic leaders tried to head off the procession, on the streets they fanned the flames of discontent and in their reports to party central organs claimed credit for the unexpected uprising. Gapon's greatest fear was that the revolutionaries, whether maliciously or from sincere enthusiasm, would join the procession, carrying red flags and shouting revolutionary slogans. Mistaking the humble procession for a bloody rebellion, the government might then refuse to receive the workers' petition or even (but would they dare?) open fire.

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in *Vpered*, ostensibly from correspondents in St. Petersburg, "were obviously compiled from real letters and foreign newspaper correspondents' reports . . ." (p. 71). A comparison of these letters with those of Gusev to Lenin bears this out. Many points of information were based on Gusev, but were given a different connotation by the editors.

<sup>66</sup> See Gusev's letter in "Perepiska N. Lenina i N. K. Krupskoi s S. I. Gusevym," p. 36. Lenin wrote, "The legal labor movement will only be a new, broader base for the Social Democratic movement" (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, p. 175).

<sup>67</sup> Keep, *The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia*, p. 158.

## CHAPTER VIII

### “*To the Tsar!*”

*And the workers were told:*

“Let us go to the tsar, as children to their father, and tell him of our woes, asking for help and justice.

What Russian heart would not respond to this call?”

From a sermon of Bishop Sergii  
of St. Petersburg

Epiphany—Thursday, January 6, 1905—was the occasion for a particularly elaborate ceremony including the blessing of the waters and the erection of a cross of ice on the Neva River. The religious services were conducted by the highest dignitaries of the Russian Orthodox Church and were attended by the emperor and his court. The majestic ceremony on the riverbank was concluded by an artillery salute. As the cannons began firing, the resplendently attired dignitaries were suddenly thrown into confusion—one of the guns fired a live round of grapeshot over their heads. The physical damage was negligible—one policeman wounded and four palace windows shattered—but the psychological effect of the incident was far more serious. Although an official inquiry eventually determined that the shooting resulted from simple negligence, the entire capital buzzed with rumors of an assassination attempt, and more terrorist attacks were predicted.<sup>1</sup> Grand Duke Constantine wrote in his diary, “It seemed like an attack on the lives of the tsar and the high officials who were present in large numbers. What horror!”<sup>2</sup> Even the usually well-informed correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* called the incident a

<sup>1</sup> Bogdanovich, *Tri poslednikh samoderzhitsa*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>2</sup> “Iz dnevnika Kostantina Romanova,” p. 105.

revolutionary plot, "clearly intended to assassinate the emperor."<sup>3</sup>

The incident further strained the tense nerves of the police officials, already overtaxed by the preparations for the ceremony and the growing unrest among the workers. Although the strike and agitation in the working quarters had begun to worry the St. Petersburg police officials, the imperial visit temporarily diverted their attention. While the workers used the Epiphany holiday to convert the Putilov strike into a general one and organize support for their appeal to the tsar, the police anxiously hovered about the imperial family.

On January 4, General Fullon had routinely called for preparatory measures to be taken to provide troops in case of disorders. In a secret letter to the headquarters of the Guards Corps, he explained that the Putilov strike had been peaceful thus far, but disorders were possible. As a precaution, in view of the heavy demands placed on the police by the transfer of residence of the dowager empress to St. Petersburg and the visit of the imperial family, General Fullon asked that troops be made available if requested.

The headquarters of the Guards, central command of the St. Petersburg military district, prepared a plan for the disposition of troops in accordance with standard operating procedure in cases of military assistance to civil authorities. Dispatching troops on the request of civil authorities was a rather common occurrence in Russia. The Corps headquarters plan divided the city into six areas and assigned military units to each under the supervision of a designated military commander and a police officer.<sup>4</sup> Thus the first steps for the use of troops in St. Petersburg on the ninth of January were made in a routine fashion, as a precautionary

<sup>3</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 21, 1905. Dates of foreign newspapers are given according to the New Style calendar.

<sup>4</sup> *Vedomost' raspredeleniia voisk po otdeleniiam dlia nariada v pomoshch' politzii*. For details, see the collection of military documents in Bonch-Bruевич, "Deviatoe ianvaria 1905 g. (Po novym materialam)," no. 1 (84), pp. 98-99.

measure, at the very beginning of the Putilov strike when the city governor still expected the dispute to be settled peacefully.

Although the Putilov strike and the agitation among the workers was of great concern to Fullon, he was confident that Gapon and the Assembly would be able to restrain their followers from violence. Paradoxically, the more agitated the workers became, the more the general depended on Gapon to control them. The police authorities were aware of developments within the Assembly branches and familiar with the ideas espoused there, but discussions at the Assembly meetings remained within the scope of issues being openly debated in public. Furthermore, the workers' speeches were less seditious than those of the liberals, not to mention the revolutionaries. The office of the city governor, justifying its tolerant disposition toward the Assembly, stated:

The attitude toward the labor movement in St. Petersburg was in accordance with the general line of policy at the time based on “confidence” in the public. This policy resulted in free discussions of all kinds of questions in the press as well as at private meetings. It seemed the same *raison d'état* would grant workers similar freedom to discuss working conditions in their gatherings in order to prepare and present their own lists of suggestions and demands.<sup>5</sup>

On the whole the police authorities were pleased with the Assembly's success in drawing workers away from revolutionary influences. They realized that the Assembly had to take an activist posture in the defense of workers' welfare. Although the propaganda in the branches was oriented toward class interests, the officials of the ministry of the in-

<sup>5</sup> “Zapiska II: O merakh priniatykh Upravleniem S.-Peterburgskogo Gradonachal'stva po povodu rabocheho dvizheniia i prekrashcheniiu voznikshikh besporiadkov,” text in Valk, “Peterburgskoe gradonachal'stvo i 9-e ianvaria,” p. 38.

terior encouraged it in hopes of channeling the workers' attention away from political opposition and into purely economic struggle. The political issues discussed in the branches were not particularly radical, and even the subject of a national representative body did not arouse concern since it was one of the measures proposed in the reform program of Sviatapolk-Mirskii himself. While most members of educated society were openly opposed to the government, the Assembly remained staunchly loyalist. Its members still sang "God Save the Tsar," collected money for war casualties, and conducted religious services for government officials who had been assassinated by revolutionaries. Although some criticism of officials was heard in the branches, the city governor and the minister of the interior were always held in high esteem. These facts, coupled with the Assembly's success in keeping the workers out of the opposition movement during the latter part of 1904, were enough to win the confidence of the office of the city governor. In his annual report to the emperor, Fullon explained his faith in Gapon and the Assembly:

Thorough observation of the [activities of the] Assembly has shown that the Assembly strictly adhered to the provisions of its statutes. Consequently the State Secretary, Plehve, treated the activity of Gapon benevolently, recognizing in it one of the truly effective means of pacifying the labor movement. In accordance with the instructions of State Secretary Plehve at first, and Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii later, the former city governor, General-Adjutant Fullon, was very responsive to the needs of the Assembly, which managed to open eleven branches in the factory-mill districts of the capital during the year covered in this report. Nothing indicated that the Assembly was deviating from its statutes and, on the contrary, everything promised the peaceful development of its activities. On the fortieth day after the death of State Secretary Plehve, the workers, led by Gapon,

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decided to place a wreath on his grave. Gapon remained aloof from student demonstrations and Social Democratic agitation.<sup>6</sup>

When the Putilov dispute began, the city governor and the police officials did not interfere with activities in the branches. General Fullon exerted his influence on behalf of the Assembly in order to prevent a strike and, once the strike began, to bring negotiations to a speedy end. He urged Gapon and his followers to call off the strike at once, promising to personally conduct “uninterrupted negotiations with the director of the Putilov plant, Smirnov, and the managements of other plants, private as well as state-owned, concerning the necessity of satisfying the workers with all possible concessions immediately acknowledged by appropriate notices posted in the plants.”<sup>7</sup> The city governor lamented the failure of his attempts to intercede on behalf of the workers and his lack of official authority to dictate policies to the management.

The open confrontation between the Assembly and the industrialists represented a challenge to the labor policies of the ministry of the interior. Denying that economic conditions in the factories were at all responsible for the unrest, the industrialists blamed the government's lax attitude toward political agitation as the root of the troubles. They were supported by the minister of finance, Kokovtsov. On the sixth of January he discussed the increasing unrest with representatives of local industries, who reported that the strike had been long in preparation and that the demands of the strikers were part of the original program of the Assembly. The industrialists advocated firmness as the only way to deal with strikers and completely rejected all the demands of the Assembly. Kokovtsov agreed with them.

<sup>6</sup> “Vsepoddaneishii otchet S. Peterburgskogo gradonachal'nika za 1904 g.,” cited in Smolin, “Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia v Peterburge,” p. 238.

<sup>7</sup> “Zapiska II,” in Valk, p. 39.



Thereafter he became the chief critic of the policies of the minister of the interior in the government administration. The next day Kokovtsov wrote a letter to Sviatopolk-Mirskii relating his discussion with the industrialists. He presented the views of the industrialists favorably and, comparing the Gaponovite strike with the strike of the Zubatov union in Odessa in 1903, called the developments “extremely dangerous.”<sup>8</sup> He recommended that Gapon and his aides be compelled to refrain from activities beyond those approved in the statutes of their organization and that measures be taken to protect private property from possible damage. The position of the factory owners, backed by the ministry of finance, remained unaltered throughout the strike.<sup>9</sup>

The officials of the ministry of the interior needed no reminder of the seriousness of the situation, particularly after the incident during the Epiphany ceremony, but all attempts to persuade Gapon to end the strike failed. On January 4 the head of the prison administration, A. M. Stremoukhov, threatened to fire Gapon if he did not terminate his activities.<sup>10</sup> On the fifth, General Fullon again tried to dissuade Gapon, telling him not to depend on the city governor’s office any longer since there was nothing it could do for the Assembly.<sup>11</sup> After his unsuccessful endeavors to see Sviatopolk-Mirskii on the sixth, Gapon was ready to give up hope of help from official channels altogether. When a messenger arrived with a summons from Metropolitan Antonii, Gapon refused to answer it. He also declined an invitation from his superior, the minister of justice, chief overseer of the prison administration.<sup>12</sup>

On Friday, January 7, Gapon received yet another invita-

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Kokovtsov, in Okun’ *et al.*, *Putilovets v trekh revoliutsiiakh*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> On the attitude of St. Petersburg industrialists to the January strike, see the comments of Romanov, “Peterburgskaia krupnaia burzhuaia v ianvarskie dni,” particularly the joint statement on the labor problem, dated January 28, 1905, on pp. 53-56.

<sup>10</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 82.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

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tion from the minister of justice and decided to make one final attempt to reach a settlement. He met with Minister N. V. Murav'ev on Friday afternoon, but their exchange was fruitless. Gapon tried to convey the seriousness of the situation and pleaded with the minister to persuade the emperor to receive the workers' delegation. He brought a copy of the petition with him, but Murav'ev declined to discuss it, saying this was the business of the ministry of the interior. Murav'ev simply demanded that the agitation among the workers and the plans for a mass demonstration be abandoned.<sup>13</sup> When Gapon again tried to contact Sviatopolk-Mirskii, he was put off and advised to see the director of police.<sup>14</sup> Instead, Gapon telephoned the minister of finance, but in the middle of their conversation the line went dead. At that moment, Gapon wrote in his memoirs, it was clear to him that there would be serious trouble, but “the movement could not be stopped without shattering every hope for the future.”<sup>15</sup>

The meeting with Murav'ev had an extremely embittering effect on both parties. The minister's comments about the meeting and Gapon rapidly spread through the official circles of St. Petersburg. The wife of General Bogdanovich recorded Gapon's impudent behavior toward Murav'ev in her diary: “He behaved with such undue familiarity and so insolently that everyone was outraged.” She could not resist noting a rumor that when Murav'ev told Gapon he was not fit to be the leader of the workers, the priest replied that fitness was not a prerequisite for a high position in Russia, since Murav'ev himself was not fit to be a minister though he had held that post for ten years.<sup>16</sup> The wife of Sviato-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86. Gapon placed the meeting with Murav'ev on the afternoon of the eighth, but it took place on the seventh. See the editorial notes in Gapon's autobiography, pp. 167-169. Numerous sources definitely establish that the meeting with the minister of justice took place on the seventh.

<sup>14</sup> Spiridovich, “Pri tsarskom rezhime,” p. 188. Spiridovich also mistakenly placed this meeting on the eighth.

<sup>15</sup> Gapon, *The Story of My Life*, p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> *Dnevnik A. V. Bogdanovich*, p. 331.

polk-Mirskii wrote in her diary that, according to Murav'ev, Gapon was a fanatically convinced socialist who felt duty bound to lay down his life for the people.<sup>17</sup>

By Friday the authorities faced a strike which already embraced most of the workers in St. Petersburg and was spreading to surrounding areas. Enterprises not already on strike had to be protected by troops. General Fullon began to take precautionary measures in earnest, assigning troops to guard certain plants and other key points. That morning he met with the chief-of-staff of the military district, General Meshetich, who informed him that an imperial instruction put St. Petersburg under the military authority of the commander of the Guard Corps, Prince Vasil'chikov.<sup>18</sup> In the evening the city governor and his police assistants met with General Vasil'chikov and his staff to work out a co-ordinated plan of action for police and troops in case of mass disorders. The previous plan was amended to divide St. Petersburg into eight sections, each under the command of a major general and a senior police officer.<sup>19</sup> The minister of the interior ordered more troops into St. Petersburg.<sup>20</sup> During the evening General Fullon also issued instructions for the following public notice to be posted in the city:

In connection with the cessation of work at numerous plants and factories in the capital, the city governor of St. Petersburg considers it his duty to warn that no gatherings or processions on the streets will be tolerated, and that the most resolute measures prescribed by law will be used to avert mass disorders.

Since the employment of armed troops may result in casualties, the workers and the public are hereby

<sup>17</sup> "Dnevnik kn. Ekateriny Alekseevny Sviatopolk Mirskoi za 1904-1905 gg.," p. 273.

<sup>18</sup> "Zapiska II," in Valk, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Sviatopolk-Mirskaia wrote in her diary (*op. cit.*, p. 273), "P ["P" or "Pepka" was her nickname for her husband] is beginning to worry about the strike and has requested more troops to protect property."

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urged to abstain from taking part in any mass gatherings on the streets and thereby protect themselves from the consequences of the disorders.<sup>21</sup>

Saturday, January 8, was a crucial day. Both sides were set on their courses of action for Sunday, and neither seemed willing to step back. The authorities by then were familiar with the text of the petition and had probably been aware of the “Program-of-the-Five” for some time. However, although it was known that Gapon was willing to compromise on the more radical demands, no attempt was ever made to ascertain what was the minimum acceptable to Gapon and his organization. In any case, the method of presentation and the use of mass action to compel the autocracy to accept the demands were the crucial issues, not the contents of the petition itself.<sup>22</sup> As long as the officials felt they had control over the movement through Gapon, they were not unduly alarmed by the petition. But once Gapon and the movement slipped out of their hands, their attitude changed. The officials of autocratic Russia could not allow thousands of restless workers to gather in the center of the capital for a Sunday demonstration. The fact that the masses were acting on their own behalf was in itself a revolutionary development, conjuring up visions of anarchy, terror, and violence. The alternative to compromising with Gapon was simply quashing the movement by police action.

On Saturday the minister of the interior made formal arrangements with the minister of war for the assignment of troops in St. Petersburg. That evening all those concerned with the matter met in the office of Sviatopolk-Mirskii to

<sup>21</sup> “Zapiska II,” in Valk, p. 43. The order was printed the next day in official newspapers (the only ones published that day in St. Petersburg), and in out-of-town papers. See, for example, *Russkie vedomosti*, January 8, 1905.

<sup>22</sup> A special office employing over one hundred officials handled an average of sixty-five thousand petitions addressed to the emperor annually, of which about seventy-five hundred were reported directly to the emperor. For an account of the work of this office, see Pisarev, *Uchrezhdenie po priniatiuu i napravleniiu proshenii*, pp. 169, 178 and 217.

finalize and approve the plan of action for Sunday. Besides the minister of the interior, those present included generals Vasil'chikov and Mashetich, the ministers of justice and finance, assistant ministers of the interior, the director of police, the city governor, and several members of the corps of gendarmes. The meeting was not considered critical enough to require the presence of the chairman of the council of ministers, Witte, who was not invited.<sup>23</sup> A relaxed, confident mood prevailed throughout the conference; there was absolutely no sense of anxiety over the coming day. Everyone was calm; everything seemed to be under control. Kokovtsov later wrote: "There was no sign of apprehension or tension during the conference. No trace of worry could be detected in the speeches of the representative from the ministry of the interior or the explanations of the chief-of-staff."<sup>24</sup> Sviatopolk-Mirskii remarked that he would not even call the matter "serious."

The conferees first took up the question of placing St. Petersburg under martial law and quickly decided to request that the emperor revoke his previous instructions, since the regular authorities were capable of handling the situation. The minister of justice, relating his talk with Gapon, warned that the priest was not to be trusted. When the question was raised as to why Gapon and his assistants had not been arrested, Sviatopolk-Mirskii and Fullon replied that Gapon remained free because his arrest would further stir up the already agitated workers. Furthermore, the minister of the interior feared that the removal of Gapon and his assistants would allow more radical elements to take over the movement. The Okhrana reports so far indicated that the movement was peaceful, and police officials

<sup>23</sup> Witte sat at home fretting and accusing the minister of finance, Kokovtsov, of deliberately preventing him from taking part in the conference. Witte, *Vospominaniia*, vol. II, p. 342. For a description of the conference, see the report by Lopukhin in 1905, document 61, p. 102; Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 189; Kokovtsov, *Out of My Past*, p. 35; and Liubimov, "Gapon i 9 ianvaria," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8, p. 127.

<sup>24</sup> Kokovtsov, pp. 35-36.

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considered Gapon capable of retaining it within an orderly framework.<sup>25</sup> The city governor assured the conference that the Okhrana maintained close surveillance over Gapon and his aides and could arrest them at any time.<sup>26</sup> The conferees decided to instruct Fullon to arrest Gapon and nineteen of his assistants immediately.<sup>27</sup>

The main purpose of the conference was to coordinate police and troop actions on Sunday. General Fullon said it was inadvisable to permit a large gathering of people on the palace square, citing as an example the catastrophe of Khodynka Field in 1896 when a large crowd waiting to receive mementos of the coronation stampeded, and hundreds were killed.<sup>28</sup> Since everyone agreed that the demonstration could not be permitted, they decided to take all necessary measures to prevent it. The city governor was to inform Gapon that the emperor would not come to St. Petersburg on Sunday. In addition, the minister of the interior explained, “Due to special deployments of troops, no processions of workers will be allowed to move toward the center of the city, particularly toward the palace square. All marches will be stopped at the outskirts of the city, and, if some groups penetrate into the city, they will be immediately dispersed.”<sup>29</sup> The brief conference concluded on an optimistic note: the workers would be told to quit their agitation; Gapon and his aides would be arrested; and the whole affair would be settled by administrative fiat without inci-

<sup>25</sup> Lopukhin in 1905, document 61, p. 102. Liubimov, no. 8, p. 127, and Spiridovich, “*Pri tsarskom rezhime*,” p. 189, report that Fullon was against arresting Gapon. The memorandum of the office of the city governor maintained that Fullon advised arresting Gapon and his assistants, but was overruled by the minister of the interior; see “*Zapiska II*,” in Valk, p. 38. Lopukhin, however, states that Fullon believed Gapon could not be arrested in the workers’ quarter without the use of troops.

<sup>26</sup> “*Zapiska II*,” Valk, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> Spiridovich, “*Pri tsarskom rezhime*,” p. 189. Spiridovich blamed Fullon for opposing the arrest of Gapon and failing to carry out the instructions for the arrest.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>29</sup> Liubimov, no. 8, p. 127.

dent. Kokovtsov later wrote: “No one at the conference considered it possible that the demonstration would have to be stopped by force, and even less that there would be bloodshed.”<sup>30</sup>

In a euphoric mood, the minister of the interior, accompanied by the director of police, departed for Tsarskoe Selo to make a personal report to the emperor. Apparently they were able to convince Nicholas II that there was no need to place the capital under martial law. The instruction was revoked, and Nicholas II dismissed his visitors after being assured that the matter was of little consequence and completely under control. This is evident from the entry in his diary:

Since yesterday all factories and plants in St. Petersburg have been on strike. Troops from the outlying areas have been ordered to reinforce the garrison. The workers are behaving peacefully so far. Their number is estimated at 120,000. The union is led by some socialist priest, Gapon. Mirskii came in the evening with a report on proposed measures.<sup>31</sup>

While the minister of the interior was at Tsarskoe Selo, the Corps commander, General Vasil'chikov, met with his regimental commanders to issue orders for Sunday. Unaware that the order for martial law had already been retracted, the general took charge of maintaining security in the capital.<sup>32</sup> In accordance with the request of the city governor, troops were instructed (1) “to prevent masses of

<sup>30</sup> Kokovtsov, p. 36. Emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> *Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolaia II*, entry for January 8, p. 194.

<sup>32</sup> It has generally been assumed that Grand Duke Vladimir, the commander of the St. Petersburg military district, and the uncle of the tsar, was in charge of the military forces on Sunday. Actually General Prince Vasil'chikov commanded the troops on that day. There is no evidence of the direct participation of Grand Duke Vladimir in the operations of troops on Sunday. On this, see also the conclusions of Nevskii, *Rabochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, p. 101.

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workers from the suburbs from reaching the central areas of the city by blocking access across the Neva River and the Obvodnyi Canal”; (2) “to patrol the streets of the city assisting the police in preventing and controlling disorders.”<sup>33</sup>

By the time Sviatopolk-Mirskii returned from Tsarskoe Selo, it was close to midnight. He summoned a representative of the Corps commander to meet with him for final instructions. While waiting, the minister briefly spoke with his staff, assuring them that the workers would not be allowed to reach the center of the city. “There is every good reason to believe that everything will turn out well tomorrow,” he promised. One of his aides was less optimistic:

The words of the minister were most reassuring, but they failed to impress me in that way. When I was returning home . . . along completely darkened streets, my heart was heavy with alarm. Doubts crept into my head. What did the minister report to the tsar? And, most important, did the minister himself understand the gravity of the situation?<sup>34</sup>

The major failure of the officials was their inability to understand or assess the mood of the workers.<sup>35</sup> They assumed that a simple prohibition of any demonstration combined with the conspicuous presence of troops in the capital would dissuade the marchers. But by the night of the eighth the workers were in such a frenzy that many were ready to face armed troops in order to reach the tsar. The movement instigated by Gapon had reached a point where it could no longer be quelled without some acknowledgment of the workers' complaints. The government, however, had such confidence in its preparations that no alternative to

<sup>33</sup> From “Iz dnevnika sobytii leibgardii Pavloskogo polka 9 ianvaria 1905 g.,” in Drezen, ed., *Tsarizm v bor'be s revoliutsiei 1905-1907: Sbornik dokumentov*, p. 91.

<sup>34</sup> Liubimov, no. 8, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup> “Evidently the sovereign was not told the truth, because it must be assumed that the minister himself did not comprehend it,” wrote Spiridovich (“Pri tsarskom rezhime,” p. 190).



police measures was seriously considered.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the imperial regime knew of no other way to deal with mass gatherings. Its only solution was to rely on the age-old, stern command so well characterized by Anton Chekhov in his short story, “Unter Prischeveev”—“People, disperse! Do not gather in crowds! Go home!” (*Narod raskhodis’! Ne tolpis! Po doman!*)

Meanwhile Father Gapon also drove his movement on to disaster. From the very start Gapon knew that a confrontation of some sort was inevitable if the Assembly wanted to attain independence. He would have preferred to achieve independence with the assistance of the authorities, but their inability or unwillingness to respond to the workers’ grievances continually frustrated him. The higher he appealed, the less sympathy he received, until the tsar himself seemed the only recourse. Everything came to depend on the Sunday procession: either a colossal triumph would propel Gapon and the Assembly to world fame, or Gapon would face persecution from the government and perhaps from his disappointed followers as well. Gapon was not willing to give up his mass following without a fight and was fully prepared to die for his cause. But if the workers were ready to defy an armed threat, he believed the government would stop short of bloodshed. Therefore, while taking every possible measure to keep the movement peaceful and orderly, Gapon made sure the workers would follow him to the end.

The last two days before the ninth were spent in readying the branches for the march. Gapon moved from place to place, everywhere addressing large crowds. There are countless descriptions of Gapon reading the petition at meetings, pausing after each statement to ask the audience, “Is this not right, comrades?” His speeches had an electrify-

<sup>36</sup> Liubimov, no. 8, p. 130. The procurator of the St. Petersburg Court, E. I. Vuich, suggested in a memorandum to the minister of justice that in order to avoid shooting at the crowd, which would undoubtedly turn the workers into revolutionaries, someone close to the emperor might receive the petitioners. The suggestion apparently had no effect. See Vuich, in *KA*, no. 1 (68), 1935, p. 48.

ing effect on the crowds, moving his audiences to the pitch of a religious revival meeting. A witness recalled that, when certain provisions were read, workers raised their hands, fingers forming the sign of the cross, "in order to indicate that these demands were sacred, and voting for them was like swearing a sacred oath."<sup>37</sup> Karelin wrote of the people as they solemnly listened to the priest, "There was something good and pure in them, something which would remain with them throughout their lives."<sup>38</sup> Some halls were so crowded that people fainted from lack of oxygen and even kerosene lamps would not burn. Gapon particularly remembered a meeting at the Narva Branch where the hall was so full the meeting had to be conducted in the street. Standing on a barrel, the priest addressed a crowd of ten thousand—"it was a noble and moving scene."<sup>39</sup> The Neva Branch meeting was also held outside. Petrov read the petition, and Gapon explained its demands, spoke of the conditions under which the workers suffered, and talked about the future. A witness recalled the effect of his words: "Many had tears involuntarily streaming from their eyes . . . and cries of desperation went up, 'Let us die at the square!'"<sup>40</sup>

In their speeches, Gapon's assistants always stressed his principal role as the leader of the workers' movement.<sup>41</sup> Gapon was the symbol of the movement—he was its personification, the man of God who, like a messiah, would lead his people to the resurrection. A French correspondent from *L'Humanité* wrote:

This is an awesome movement which has unleashed elements of spontaneous, universal and mysterious forces that surpass the confines of a single party, and there is one man whose influence over the workers,

<sup>37</sup> Gurevich, *9-e ianvaria: Po dannym "anketnoi komissii,"* p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 111.

<sup>39</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 89.

<sup>40</sup> Gurevich, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 112.

over the entire working class world, has grown astonishingly: the priest Gapon. . . He has a popular eloquence which spellbinds everyone. He holds his audience with words which have a moving simplicity, expressed often in the form of a dialogue between the orator and his followers.<sup>42</sup>

His voice hoarse from addressing so many meetings, Father Gapon pleaded with his followers, calling on them to come with him, with their wives and their children, “with the cross and icons, and a portrait of the tsar . . . to the ringing of the church bells.”<sup>43</sup> People swore to follow him and, if need be, to die. When Gapon finished speaking, his assistants would take over the meeting and repeat his words so that the speeches were similar throughout the branches. The following dialogue between speaker and audience, published in *Vpered*, is typical.

The excitement is great. A worker orator reads the petition for nearly the tenth time before the constantly changing audience. (The hall accommodates up to seven hundred people and is completely full.) He addresses them with the same questions:

“Do the police and soldiers dare stop us from going through, comrades?”

“They do not dare,” seven hundred voices thunder in reply.

“Comrades,” continues the orator, “it is better for us to die for our demands than to live as we have lived until now.”

“We will die,” comes the answer.

<sup>42</sup> Avenard, *Le 22 janvier nouveau style*, p. 117.

<sup>43</sup> Recollections of Chudin in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, ed., *Pervaiia russkaia revoliutsiia*, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

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"Do you swear to die?"

"We swear!"

"Let the ones who swear raise their hands." Hundreds of hands enthusiastically fly up into the air.

"Comrades, what if those who swear today lose their courage tomorrow, and will not go with us. . . ."

"Let them be damned!" roars the crowd.<sup>44</sup>

Such highly emotional scenes created a state of almost hysterical religious fervor among the listeners, who beheld the petition as a sacred document and crossed themselves continually while its provisions were being explained. Despite bitter cold, those listening in the street took off their caps. Encouraged by the Assembly leadership, the workers clung to a fanatical belief in the goodness of the tsar and his good will toward his people—his prestige was never higher among the workers of St. Petersburg. They believed he held their lives in his hands. It seemed to them that they only needed to reach the tsar, to tell him of their woes, and he would respond to his children as a loving father. Marshals were selected to be sure the procession would remain reverent and orderly. Workers were told, "Put on your best dress . . . take your children and your wives. No arms, not even penknives."<sup>45</sup> The warning against arms was frequent-

<sup>44</sup> *Vpered*, no. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Bruno Briukkel', "Iz vospominanii o 9-m ianvare," *Petrogradskaia pravda*, January 22, 1920. On the carrying of weapons, see the report of the committee of lawyers selected to investigate Bloody Sunday. The committee conducted extensive interviews with the participants: "Doklad komissii izbrannoi obshchim sobraniiem prisiazhnykh poverennykh 16 ianvaria 1905 g., po povodu sobytii 9-11 ianvaria," 1905, document 62, p. 106 (hereafter cited as "Lawyers' report"). Even some revolutionary organizations instructed their members not to carry weapons during the march. Bolshevik E. D. Stasova wrote, "All our comrades who were to take part in the march to the tsar with the workers were strictly ordered not to carry any weapons" (in *Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, 50 let pervoi russkoi revoliutsii: Materialy nauchnoi sessii*, p. 221).

ly repeated, as was the reminder that no red flags would be tolerated.<sup>46</sup> The workers were advised to be careful even with red handkerchiefs.<sup>47</sup>

The tsar's absence from St. Petersburg was well known, but Tsarskoe Selo was only one-half hour's train ride from the capital. As early as the seventh Gapon told a crowd in one branch that he would personally inform the tsar of the procession so that he would be in St. Petersburg on Sunday. Gapon promised to send the tsar and the minister of the interior copies of the petition on January 8 along with a letter begging the sovereign to receive the workers at the Winter Palace.<sup>48</sup> The workers were to wait for the tsar if necessary. At one meeting Gapon advised them to bring food along in case they had to wait until late at night.<sup>49</sup> They were also prepared to send Father Gapon with a delegation to Tsarskoe Selo or even postpone the march, provided the tsar promised to meet with them later.<sup>50</sup>

Until Friday Gapon continually instructed his assistants not to allow any attacks on the tsar, but after his talk with the minister of justice and unsuccessful attempts to discuss the situation with the ministers of finance and of the interior, Gapon changed his tactics. When the director of police heard of Sviatopolk-Mirskii's refusal to see the priest, he tried to contact Gapon. Fearing a trap, Gapon refused to come for an appointment and turned down a second summons from the metropolitan as well.<sup>51</sup> Previously Gapon had been eager to obtain the support of the police, but now

<sup>46</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62 p. 106.

<sup>47</sup> Reported by a participant, in V. F. Pletnev, ed., *Sud nad Zubatovym i Gaponom: Instsenirovka* (Moscow, 1925), p. 27. In the Narva Branch a suggestion that a red flag be carried met "with furious protests from the workers" (Gurevich, p. 13).

<sup>48</sup> Ianov, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 319; also Somov, "Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticeskogo dvizheniia," p. 39.

<sup>49</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 90.

<sup>50</sup> Gurevich, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> Spiridovich, "Pri tsarskom rezhime," p. 188. Metropolitan Antonii later told the Holy Synod that the Consistory of St. Petersburg was aware of Gapon's activities and twice summoned him to account for his actions, but Gapon did not respond: see Avidonov, "9 ianvaria 1905 i sinod," p. 55.

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he seemed to be deliberately avoiding them. In the branches, he instructed his assistants to spread the idea that, in case the demonstration was prevented, the fault lay with the government and the tsar. After the seventh, Gapon inserted an additional question for the audience in his usual speech: “What if the tsar refuses to hear us out?” The answer readily suggested itself to the excited workers—“Then he is no tsar to us!” This slogan quickly spread among the branches, and soon thousands answered the same question in unison. According to a witness, “A mighty and bewildering cry burst out as though from a single breast: ‘Then we have no tsar!’” Fearing that the workers might be prevented from reaching the palace, Gapon tested their courage, asking whether they really meant the last words of the petition, “Let our lives be a sacrifice for suffering Russia. We do not regret this sacrifice, but offer it gladly.” He asked them to swear to it, and they replied in unison, “We will all die. We swear to stand to the very last one of us.”<sup>52</sup> At the same time, when someone shouted, “Down with autocracy,” the crowd angrily refused to support the appeal. Paradoxically, they remained convinced to the last that they would succeed in seeing the tsar.

The principal reason for the workers’ confidence was their conviction that they were doing nothing illegal and that their cause was just. Facts and rumors nourished their optimism. The police authorities made no efforts to interfere with activities in the branches or to prevent gatherings of people.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, *individual policemen on duty in the vicinity of the branches* often expressed sympathy with the workers, and some even participated in their discussions.<sup>54</sup> Father Gapon was known to be on good terms with the authorities and was himself an employee of the state; therefore it was widely believed that the authorities were

<sup>52</sup> Gurevich, pp. 13 and 11.

<sup>53</sup> The official communiqué in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, January 10, 1905, explained: “Since the strike was not accompanied by disruption of public order, no repressive measures were taken by the authorities.”

<sup>54</sup> Gurevich, pp. 14-15.

favorably inclined toward the Assembly as long as its activities remained orderly and members abstained from seditious propaganda. Various officials knew of the procession and had received copies of the petition. Large notices about the march were posted on the doors of branches. The police did not comment on the notices, nor did they try to remove them. Gapon assured his assistants that the city governor had promised they would not be arrested, and, after Gapon first met with General Fullon, rumors circulated that the emperor had already decided to grant the workers' demands.<sup>55</sup> Deliberately or as a result of misinformation, similar encouraging reports were passed on to the workers during meetings. For example, in the Petersburg region Branch the workers were told that Father Gapon had received a telegram from the tsar communicating his willingness to receive a delegation.<sup>56</sup>

More ominous forewarnings did not seem to penetrate the workers' consciousness. The city governor's order forbidding street demonstrations appeared only in the official papers. These were not posted on the walls, as was the custom, until Saturday afternoon, and then only in the central part of the city. Few saw the order in the workers' quarters, and even those who did assumed it did not apply to them.<sup>57</sup> The language of the order was ambiguous, and, because of the printers' strike, it was poorly printed, unlike the usual government publications. The order was unsigned, leading workers to suspect a deliberate forgery by someone who wanted to sabotage the procession.<sup>58</sup> The workers took the order to mean that unauthorized, disorderly meetings and demonstrations were prohibited. Since their own meetings continued without police interference even after publication of the order, they had reason to think the prohibition did not apply to them. According to an officer in one of the

<sup>55</sup> Okhrana report in 1905, document 19, p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> Nadezhdin, ed., "Krovavye dni v Peterburge. (Pis'mo ochevidtsa)," *Na rodnoi storone. Otkliki s chuzhbiny*, no. 1, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> Gurevich, pp. 15-16. It is probable that the workers themselves may have removed the notices posted in their quarters.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16, and "Lawyers' report," 1905, pp. 106-107.

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branches, a delegation sent to the office of the city governor to inquire about the meaning of the notice was told that the warning applied only to those who disturbed the peace. A peaceful crowd would not be fired upon.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, the increased police activity in the city and the presence of troops aroused some concern, but it also encouraged speculation that the troops would protect the demonstrators from revolutionaries and those wishing to prevent the meeting between the people and the tsar. The general impression was that troops were posted to make sure the workers behaved themselves. It was even rumored that refreshments were being prepared in the palace for the workers' delegation and that a parade would be held afterward to celebrate the great occasion.<sup>60</sup> Although most of the workers were convinced that the demonstration would be permitted, the presence of troops and the leaflets issued by revolutionary organizations created a vague sense of apprehension, which only heightened the emotional exaltation.<sup>61</sup> Neither Gapon nor his assistants concealed the possibility of tragic consequences from the workers, but the danger was presented in such a way as to inspire them to greater sacrifices: “. . . people will go to the tsar through all perils, will go unarmed and humble, ready for anything in order ‘to obtain justice for Russia.’ ”<sup>62</sup> The workers thought it inconceivable that the tsar would refuse to see his suffering people or force a confrontation, yet they were almost schizophrenic in holding expectations of both success and failure. A report based on extensive interviews with participants in the march concluded, “Everyone believed they would deliver the petition to the tsar, but at the same time, deep inside, expected death and swore to die for the ‘just cause.’ ”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> “Lawyers’ report,” 1905, p. 106.

<sup>60</sup> Nevskii, *Rabochee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, p. 108, wrote that “With naive faith in the tsar, not one worker who went could have even imagined that he would be shot at.”

<sup>61</sup> Gurevich, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> From an extensive report compiled by the St. Petersburg Jewish Workers’ Bund organization—“Sobytiia 9-go—11-go ianvaria,” p. 3.



Saturday evening Gapon gathered his principal lieutenants to make the final arrangements for the next day. Each branch was to determine its own route for the procession, but they were all to reach the palace square by one o'clock. Gapon decided to carry two large handkerchiefs with him, one white and one red. After the presentation of the petition to the tsar, he intended to come out before the crowd and wave one of them. The white would mean the petition was accepted and signal the start of a great celebration; the red would mean rejection and the beginning of a popular rebellion.<sup>64</sup> To be certain that the government was fully apprised of the workers' intents and could not plead ignorance later, Gapon composed a letter to the minister of the interior which was delivered by Kuzin:

Your Excellency,

The workers and inhabitants of various estates of St. Petersburg wish to see, and they must see, the Tsar on Sunday, January ninth, at 2:00 P.M. on the Palace Square, in order that they might convey to Him in person their own needs and the needs of the people. The Tsar has nothing to fear. I, as the representative of the Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg, my assistants and comrades, and even the so-called revolutionary groups of various leanings guarantee His personal inviolability. Let Him, as a true Tsar, come to His people with a courageous heart and accept our petition from our hands. This is essential for His own welfare and for the welfare of all the inhabitants of St. Petersburg and the

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The report was compiled on the basis of eyewitness accounts used by both Gurevich and the "Lawyers' report." I am grateful to the Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement, Atran Center for Jewish Culture of New York City, for permitting me access to its file on Gapon.

<sup>64</sup> Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei," p. 206. See also Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 90; and Somov, p. 39.

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Fatherland. Otherwise the moral bond that binds the Russian people and their Tsar might be broken. It is your duty, a grave moral responsibility before your Tsar as well as the entire Russian people, to convey all of the above to the attention of His Imperial Majesty immediately, along with the enclosed copy of our petition. Tell the Tsar that I, the workers, and many thousands of Russian citizens with complete trust in Him are irrevocably determined to reach the Winter Palace. Let Him reply to us with deeds, and not in manifestos.

A copy of this, as a witness to our good intent, will be brought to the attention of the entire Russian people.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, Gapon wrote a letter directly to the tsar:

Sire,

Do not believe the ministers tell Thee the whole truth about the present state of affairs. All of the people have faith in Thee and have decided to appear tomorrow before the Winter Palace at 2:00 P.M. in order to tell Thee of their needs.

If Thou will waver and will not appear before the people, Thou will have broken the moral bond between Thyself and Thy people. Their faith in Thee will have been destroyed. Blood will be spilled, and it will lie between Thyself and the people. Stand before Thy people and receive with open heart our urgent plea. I, as representative of the workers, and all my comrades guarantee the inviolability of Thy person.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> The letter was signed by Gapon and his assistants, and copies of it were distributed widely. Somov (p. 40) claimed that the letter had been written under the influence of his group.

<sup>66</sup> Varnashev, p. 206. Filippov, correspondent of the St. Petersburg telegraph agency, wrote that he was present when the letter was written, and that he gave 25 rubles from agency funds to cover the

The letter and a copy of the petition were sent directly to Tsarskoe Selo by messenger.

Gapon's assistants were better informed of the situation than most of their followers, and, according to Gapon and Varnashev, their mood also was resolute. Gapon told them,

A great moment for us has come. Do not grieve if there are victims. It is not in the fields of Manchuria, but here, in the streets of the capital, that blood, if it be spilt, will prepare the ground for the resurrection of Russia. Do not remember me with ill feeling. Show that the workmen can not only organize the people, but can die for them.<sup>67</sup>

Although most of his assistants seemed elated by these words, several apparently became alarmed. When Gapon suggested they all have a picture taken “in parting” (*na proshchanie*), they began to press him. Why in parting? Did he anticipate serious trouble? Gapon hastened to assure them that they had nothing to fear, repeating General Fulon's promise that they would not be arrested. His own fate, however, was sealed. He was certain the government would not forgive him, and he fully expected either arrest or death.<sup>68</sup> His words seemed to relieve most of the assistants. Inozemtsev later swore he had no feeling of apprehension at all, but Ianov and his aide, Klimov, were still sufficiently worried to avoid being photographed in a group.<sup>69</sup> Many wrote notes to their families and exchanged the names of

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traveling expenses of two workers to deliver it. Gapon also implored Filippov to use his connections to convey the gravity of the situation to some of his highly placed acquaintances (Filippov, “Stranichka iz proshlogo,” p. 121). The text of the letter is given in *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 64 (January 12/25, 1905), p. 234.

<sup>67</sup> Gapon, *The Story of My Life*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>68</sup> Interrogation reports of Inozemtsev and Ianov, in Bukhbinder, “K istorii Sobraniia,” pp. 309-310 and 320. See also N. P. Petrov, “Zapiski,” p. 53.

<sup>69</sup> Ianov in Bukhbinder, “K istorii Sobraniia,” p. 320. They were later photographed separately with Gapon.

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close relatives so that comrades could notify next-of-kin. Vera Karelina asked some friends to take care of her daughter in case she and her husband did not survive.<sup>70</sup> The passionate commitment of these people is best expressed in the letter Ivan Vasil'ev, chairman of the Assembly, left to his wife and young son:

Niusha!

If I fail to return, and if I am killed, then, Niusha, do not cry. You will be able to get along somehow at first, then find employment at a factory and work. Raise Vaniura and tell him that I died a martyr for the freedom and happiness of the people. I shall have perished, if such be the case, for our own happiness as well.

Bring him up in the best way you can, so that he can be like his father. Niusha, if I do not return, then save this note and preserve it: When Vania grows up, I give him my blessings. Tell him that he should not forget you. Let him understand that his father died for the good of the people, for the workers. I kiss you.

Your loving father and husband, Vania.

Niusha, if I die, you will know of it from one of my comrades; otherwise, I will write you or come to see you. I kiss you, farewell. Regards to father, brothers and all relations.

Farewell, your Vania<sup>71</sup>

The educated, liberal segment of society was also excited and disturbed by the preparations for the march. It was obvious that the government was determined to stop the march, and equally obvious that the workers were intent on

<sup>70</sup> Vengerova, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaya, vol. 1, p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> The note was published by Kuzin in *Pravda*, January 21, 1923. A facsimile of the note is reproduced in Mitel'man, p. 191.

proceeding with it. Convinced that a national tragedy was in the making, a group of prominent men of letters met to find a way to prevent the disaster. Because of his close personal relationship with Witte, they asked I. V. Gessen, the editor of the liberal, lawyers' newspaper, *Pravo*, to intercede with Witte and try to convince him not to use arms. Gessen doubted that Witte could do anything in this matter, but he agreed to talk to his friend. As expected, Witte admitted there was nothing he could do.<sup>72</sup>

Since their first attempt at mediation through the government had failed, the liberals asked to speak with a representative of the workers. Gapon's secretary, Kuzin, was sent to talk with them. Kuzin explained that the workers would not resort to violence if the tsar could not see them the next day. "Let him only tell us to come at another time," he said. The liberals pressed him further. Suppose the tsar declined to speak with such a large crowd? Kuzin answered, "We have guaranteed the inviolability of his person. This was stated in the letter to Sviatopolk-Mirskii. But, as a last resort, let him receive a delegation from us, even in Tsarskoe Selo, but only a real delegation selected by us, headed by Father Gapon, to speak with him personally and not through officials."<sup>73</sup> The assembled intellectuals were helpless, but, feeling morally obligated to do something, they decided to send a delegation to Witte and Sviatopolk-Mirskii. An impressive group, including the prominent lawyer E. I. Kedrin, the writers Maxim Gorky and V. A. Miatkotin, the publicists I. F. Annenskii, A. V. Peshekhonov, and K. K. Arsen'ev, the historians V. I. Semevskii and N. I. Kareev, the editor I. V. Gessen, and the workers' representative, Kuzin, was selected.

The delegates called for an appointment with Sviatopolk-Mirskii, but the minister, who was due at Tsarskoe Selo that night, instructed his assistant on police matters, General Rydzevskii, to receive them in his stead.<sup>74</sup> Arriving at the

<sup>72</sup> Gessen, *V dvukh vekakh*, p. 192.

<sup>73</sup> Bund report, p. 4; Gurevich, p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> Liubimov, no. 8, p. 128.

residence of the minister of the interior, the delegates were asked to register and were only then informed that the minister could not see them. They were next escorted to the police department, where General Rydzevskii told them the government was fully aware of the situation and that everything was under control. The delegates implored the general to avoid the use of force. They emphasized the peaceful intentions of the workers and urged restraint. The general was unmoved. A joint statement of the delegates described his disinterested response: "He listened to our pleading, said that the matter did not concern him, shrugged his shoulders in utter indifference, and left."<sup>75</sup> An apologist for the regime, defending General Rydzevskii, wrote that the general "sensibly advised the visiting delegation to plead with the workers and not with the authorities: if the prohibited demonstration did not take place, there would be no danger of bloodshed."<sup>76</sup>

The delegation left the police department utterly dejected and proceeded to the residence of the chairman of the council of ministers, Witte, who listened to them gravely but said the matter was out of his hands and only Sviatopolk-Mirskii was in a position to help them. Witte telephoned the minister of the interior to report his conversation with the delegates, but Sviatopolk-Mirskii declined to speak with them in person.<sup>77</sup> Powerless in the face of the

<sup>75</sup> The statement of the delegation was drafted by Gorky and others in the form of a public appeal condemning the actions of the regime. The appeal was signed by the entire delegation. Text in 1905, document 56, pp. 86-88. Gorky gives his own account in a letter to his wife, E. P. Peshkova, published in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 28, letter no. 303 (January 9, 1905), pp. 346-349. There is one of several fictionalized accounts of this visit by him in his "Savva Morozov" (see Bibliography, under Gorkii).

<sup>76</sup> Ol'denburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II*, vol. II, book 2, p. 268. The delegates did ask Kuzin if workers would consider canceling the march, and Kuzin replied that it was too late for that.

<sup>77</sup> In his memoirs Witte stated that he telephoned Sviatopolk-Mirskii only to report his talk with the delegation; see Vitte, vol. II, p. 342. The delegates, however, left with the impression that Witte tried to intercede with Sviatopolk-Mirskii on their behalf; see Gessen, p. 192, and 1905, document 56, p. 87. This impression is also supported by the

blind obstinacy of the government officials, the liberal intelligentsia could only sit by and watch the tragedy unfold. Before the strike began, few had ever heard of Gapon. Suddenly, within a few days, his name had become a legend. An elemental upheaval was engulfing the working masses, and the intellectuals could not stop it. A desperate sense of approaching disaster hung over them late that evening. Few doubted that the autocratic regime would try to prevent the proposed demonstration, but not many contemplated the full extent of the horror that was soon to take place. For educated, liberal society the night was filled with “frightening uncertainty.”<sup>78</sup>

Night fell over the working-class quarters, but the streets seemed alive, pulsating with expectation. Long after dark, Gapon addressed a huge crowd outside the Narva Branch. He was exhausted, his voice hoarse and cracked from shouting. He warned that the path to the tsar would not be easy. When he mentioned that his own life was in danger, and that he would probably be arrested, the crowd promised to protect him. He ended the speech by comparing the approaching day to the Resurrection, the day of awakening and the dawn of a new life for the Russian workers. Tomorrow would be their Calvary and salvation; tomorrow they would rise from the dead; tomorrow they would walk with the Lord.<sup>79</sup>

Gapon's fears of arrest were well-founded since that night the order for his arrest and imprisonment had been issued.<sup>80</sup> His followers went to considerable lengths to protect him from the police. Accompanied by a bodyguard, he was disguised as a woman and taken to the apartment of a

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entry in the diary of Sviatopolk-Mirskaia to the effect that Witte called her husband late that night and asked him to see the delegation. He refused. See Sviatopolk-Mirskaia, “Dnevnik,” p. 274.

<sup>78</sup> Bund report, p. 5. See also the discussion on the response of liberal intelligentsia to the January events in Erman, *Intelligentsiia v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii*, pp. 44ff.

<sup>79</sup> Gurevich, p. 17.

<sup>80</sup> The text of the order is given in the editorial notes to Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 169.

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worker in the Narva district.<sup>81</sup> Although the Okhrana had specific instructions to keep Gapon under constant surveillance, they could not locate him when the order for arrest came. It was estimated that over two hundred workers were guarding the priest. His arrest could not have been carried out without a serious battle, and this the embarrassed police were reluctant to risk.<sup>82</sup> Safe in the care of the workers, Gapon was able to get some rest. He declined food, but drank some tea and smoked incessantly. Finally, overcome by exhaustion, he fell into a deep sleep.<sup>83</sup>

The capital was in a restless state. Some well-to-do residents, hearing rumors of riot and destruction, left the city for the duration of the strike.<sup>84</sup> Detachments of soldiers patrolled the unusually busy streets, and troops were posted in front of public buildings and before the residences of prominent personages of the empire, particularly members of the Romanov dynasty. A large crowd of workers gathered at the railroad station to await the arrival of the tsar from Tsarskoe Selo.<sup>85</sup>

Various revolutionary organizations were hastily meeting to determine their courses of action. Their former policy of opposition to Gapon and the demonstration had failed. Now more than ever the workers stood staunchly behind Gapon. Hostility toward revolutionary speakers in the branches had increased, and the Okhrana reported with satisfaction that on January 8 several revolutionaries were beaten up by workers.<sup>86</sup> The revolutionary organizations, particularly the Social Democrats, were in a dilemma. Despite their opposition to the march, they could neither pre-

<sup>81</sup> See account of Grigor'ev in Pozern, *Putilovtsy v 1905 godu*, p. 19.

<sup>82</sup> "Zapiska II," in Valk, pp. 40-41; Lopukhin's report in 1905, document 61, p. 102.

<sup>83</sup> The statement of the worker who sheltered Gapon in his apartment is given in Gurevich, p. 24. Gapon refused to eat anything the next day as well and just drank some tea.

<sup>84</sup> Sviatopolk-Mirskaia, "Dnevnik," p. 273, wrote: "It is said that he [Gapon] is inciting workers to go to the Winter Palace and to destroy factories."

<sup>85</sup> Liubimov, no. 8, p. 129.

<sup>86</sup> Okhrana report in 1905, document 24, p. 35.



vent it nor ignore it. Having predicted the worst possible outcome, they were obliged to share in the danger, or risk being accused of cowardice and losing credence with the workers. The Bolshevik Committee decided that, when the government attempted to stop the demonstration, revolutionaries would take advantage of the confusion and assume leadership over the crowds. Although the Bolsheviks assumed that the government would try to stop the march, according to a participant even they had "no conviction whatsoever that a massacre was about to take place."<sup>87</sup>

Doroshenko, the Bolshevik organizer of the city district, met with his regional organization to make final preparations. He instructed his group to meet at a designated place the next morning so they could all proceed together. One of his more active and militant workers volunteered to prepare a red flag to be unfurled if the occasion presented itself. To the great disappointment of Doroshenko, only about fifteen people came the next morning. Among the missing was his flag-bearer, who was later unmasked as a police agent.<sup>88</sup> The police were thus alerted to the plans of the revolutionaries, and this Bolshevik meeting became the source of subsequent statements by officials that the revolutionaries intended to use the demonstration for their own purposes.<sup>89</sup> Unsure of what the coming day would bring, but confident that the government would prove their dire predictions correct, the revolutionaries were counting on the failure of the march. They hoped that the disappointed workers, with all their illusions shattered, would flock to the underground organizations and begin the real work of revolution. The Bolshevik leadership, including Gusev, met with some Mensheviks to coordinate their actions. They soon concluded that, since they did not control the movement, their only option was to be in the streets the next day with the workers:

<sup>87</sup> Doroshenko, p. 214.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>89</sup> Okhrana report in 1905, document 24, p. 35. The incident with the flag was frequently cited in subsequent reports as evidence of the revolutionary intentions of the workers.

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And there was such confidence that this “tomorrow” would be a great revolutionary day that several comrades even expressed an apprehension that crept into our minds: “And suppose the workers do not show up tomorrow? After all, we have been trying to convince them not to go!”<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Sokolovskaia, “Neskol’ko strochek vospominanii,” p. 29.

## Bloody Sunday: *January 9, 1905*

Let that day be darkness! . . .  
That night—let thick darkness seize it!  
let it not rejoice among the days  
of the year,  
let it not come into the number  
of the months. . . . (Job 3:4, 6)

Oh, if only that day was not in our history!  
From a sermon of Bishop Sergii of  
St. Petersburg

Few slept peacefully in St. Petersburg that night. Long before daybreak workers began filling the branch halls of the Assembly. They came with their families, dressed in their best clothes as though for a religious holiday or national celebration. The mood in the branches was solemn. Many went to early services to pray. When later asked to describe how they spent the night, the workers generally replied, "We slept little. We were waiting for the morning. . . . Those who believed in God prayed."<sup>1</sup>

The military command, meanwhile, finished preparations for the disposition of troops. To augment the local garrison, additional units from Pskov, Revel, and other areas were ordered to St. Petersburg. Five battalions, representing three regiments from Pskov, arrived by Saturday evening, and another five from three Revel regiments arrived early Sunday morning. According to an official report, "Units of infantry and cavalry occupied all possible routes through which the workers could penetrate into the city."<sup>2</sup>

The troops assigned to duty in the streets of the capital on the ninth of January numbered twenty-one-and-a-half

<sup>1</sup> Gurevich, *9-e ianvaria: Po dannym "anketnoi komissii,"* p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> From a report of the chief-of-staff of the Guards, General Meshetich, in 1905, document 35, p. 50.

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battalions of infantry, twenty-three squadrons of cavalry and eight-and-a-half "hundreds" of cossacks.<sup>3</sup> Most of the units were placed in position during the late night and early morning hours. Some troops went to church on Sunday before assuming their assigned posts, and the reserves for Palace Square did not have to report there until eleven o'clock in the morning. Thus on the evening of the eighth the presence of troops was not overly conspicuous. A worker related how he and his friends walked late at night along Nevskii Prospect to Palace Square which was brightly lit and completely calm. "It appeared that everything was peaceful; the plan of Gapon did not portend anything dangerous."<sup>4</sup> In the morning the presence of troops became increasingly evident, but even then the movement of individuals through St. Petersburg was not impeded. Numerous accounts by workers described walks along the streets and around Palace Square before the noon hour. Many people were able to gather at the square and wait there for the arrival of the main processions from the branches. Although each branch was to work out its own route and time of departure, all were to converge on the square before two to

<sup>3</sup> "Dispozitsiia voinskikh chastei v Peterburge na 9 ianvaria," 1905, document 34, pp. 47-49. The figures differ considerably from the often cited totals given by Bonch-Bruevich in "Deviatoe ianvaria 1905 goda," pp. 97-152. Bonch-Bruevich used the preliminary request for the assignment of 43½ infantry battalions, 10 cavalry squadrons and 17 "hundreds" (the equivalent of squadrons) of cossacks. From these figures Bonch-Bruevich calculated that the government deployed in St. Petersburg on January 9 over "40,000 bayonets and sabres." This total he obtained by adding averages of unit strengths and adding 10,000 policemen to the total. Actually the total number was considerably lower. Bonch-Bruevich incorrectly placed in the capital some units that were not there, and did not include others that were. He calculated the composition of units on their full prescribed strength, whereas, due to wartime conditions, garrison units were greatly under-strength, often by more than half. On this, see 1905, documents 40 and 47, pp. 58 and 74, and note 14 on p. 811. Recent calculations by a Soviet historian estimate the strength of military units on that day to have been 9,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry; see Semanov, *Krovavoe voskresen'ie*, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Chudin, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, ed., "Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia," vol. II, p. 21.

await the main body from Narva and the presentation to the tsar.

The most distant branches had the longest road to travel, and consequently activity at the Kolpino Branch, located near Tsarskoe Selo, began long before dawn. It was bitterly cold as a group of several hundred workers set off on foot for the capital twenty-six kilometers away. The crowd was peaceful and did not expect to meet any resistance. As a witness recalled, "Even if someone had said the tsar would not come out to the workers, no one would have believed him." When one marcher tried to start a revolutionary song, he was silenced immediately with the rebuke, "You are violating order; it is necessary to conduct oneself as quietly as possible."<sup>5</sup>

At the Rozhdestvenskii Branch, a group of about twenty-five workers sat through the night discussing the coming day. There were speculations of every sort, but no one knew exactly what to expect. Early in the morning two workers were sent out to reconnoiter, establish the best route to the Winter Palace, and contact other branches. The scouts found large numbers of troops at various points along the way and, on returning to the branch, recommended a roundabout route to the Pevchii Bridge by the Palace Square. Since time was getting short, the scouts were sent out again to contact workers from the Neva Branch who were to join them. In trying to cross the Obvodnyi Canal, the scouts found the bridges blocked by troops and were compelled to go over the ice of the Neva River. Arriving at the branch, they found a large number of people preparing to depart. The scouts briefly reported their findings and suggested the marchers from Neva take the route over the ice and across the Pevchii Bridge to Palace Square.<sup>6</sup>

The sun was just beginning to rise as the waiting crowds

<sup>5</sup> Some anonymous recollections appear in "Vospominaniia i vpechatleniia," *Petrogradskaia pravda*, January 22, 1920, p. 2. See also Gurevich, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> A. M. Filippov, "9 ianvaria 1905 g.," p. 3.

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from the Neva Branch began to move along the riverbank. It was a cold, crisp day. "A more perfect and lovely day never dawned. The temperature was five degrees. The air was crisp and invigorating, and the sky almost cloudless. The gilded domes of the cathedrals and the churches, the frost-encrusted roofs and facades of the houses, brilliantly illuminated by the sun, formed a superb panorama."<sup>7</sup> The workers carried icons, religious items, and portraits of the tsar. They tried to reassure each other, passing around rumors that one of the Neva Branch leaders had visited a relative, an employee of the gendarmerie, who assured him the gendarmes knew everything and would not interfere.<sup>8</sup> At first women and children were placed in front of the procession so they could get a better look at the tsar. It was also hoped that their presence might dissuade the soldiers from interference, but rumors that the soldiers might fire on the procession were generally discounted: "We will grasp them by the shoulders; we will tell them: 'Brothers, what is the matter with you? How is it possible [to shoot] at your own?'"<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless first-aid supplies were procured in case of an emergency, and the women and children were moved back to the middle ranks. Before departure the chairman of the branch, Petrov, spoke to the marchers, building up their courage and determination. With cries of "Long live freedom," the marchers started forward along the Shlissel'burg embankment with the strongest and bravest in the front ranks.<sup>10</sup>

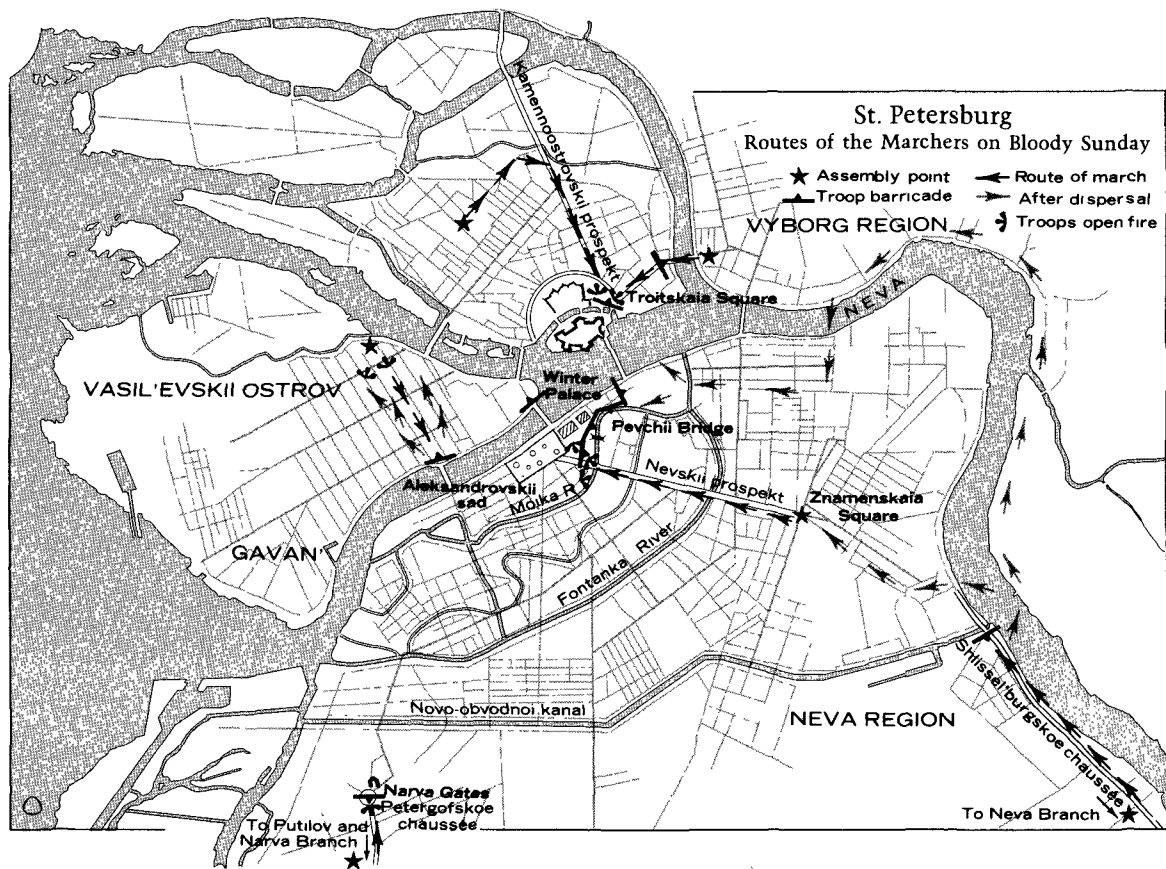
At the bridge over the canal this huge crowd, estimated to be over sixteen thousand strong, was halted by a unit of

<sup>7</sup> *The Times* (London), January 23, 1905, p. 5. The sun rose in St. Petersburg on January 9 at 8:37. The *Daily Mail* (London) on the same day informed its readers that in St. Petersburg it was "bitterly cold, with piercing wind and fine driving snow."

<sup>8</sup> Gurevich, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21. See also Kondrat'ev and Raschetnova, eds., "Ochevidtsy o 9 ianvare 1905 g. v Peterburge," pp. 78-79; Paialin, *Zavod imeni Lenina*, pp. 116-117. The authorities estimated the crowd to be over sixteen thousand; see 1905, document 44, p. 68. The "Lawyers' report" gave a figure between five and ten thousand; see 1905, document 62, p. 112.



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infantry and two hundred cossacks. A police officer and the colonel of the cossacks advanced toward the procession as Petrov and his assistants stepped out to meet them. Petrov asked the officers to let them through, pointing out that the marchers were orderly and determined to reach their goal. The officer replied that his orders were to prevent them from crossing the bridge. The crowd behind was pressing forward, cutting off their discussion, when suddenly shots rang out, apparently volleys of blanks fired into the air. At first those in the rear panicked, but a cry of "Comrades! Halt! Do not betray us!" restored order. Mounted cossacks struggled to hold back the surging crowd with blows from their whips and the flats of their sabres. In return the workers hurled insults at the riders and called on them to join the demonstration. One old man in front fell to his knees begging to be let through, but the cossacks stubbornly pressed the crowd back.

Remembering the advice of the scouts from the Rozhdestvenskii Branch, some of the workers began breaking down the fences along the bank of the Neva. The procession was soon diverted from the road, and small groups proceeded to the city over the ice. About two-thirds of the original group from Neva reached Palace Square. The troops made no further efforts to stop them, and Father Gapon ascribed their restraint to "the humanitarianism of the officer."<sup>11</sup> Although injuries among the Neva group were not extensive, some workers, among them Petrov, were crushed in the dense crowd or trampled by horses. Despite some injuries caused by the cossack blows, casualties were neither as many nor as serious as the *Manchester Guardian* reported, its correspondent, apparently mistaking the blank volleys for actual shots, having claimed that the dead and wounded were removed on five sledges.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 102. The most detailed account of the march from Neva is in Gurevich, pp. 26-27. Paialin, pp. 118-119, relies mostly on Gurevich. See also the accounts of participants in *Iskra*, no. 85, and in Kondrat'ev and Raschetnova, pp. 78-80.

<sup>12</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 23, 1905, p. 7.



Some branches, including Rozhdestvenskii, adopted the tactic of sending workers to the palace grounds in small groups. The last group from the Rozhdestvenskii Branch left for the square at ten thirty after singing a common prayer. By keeping to side streets, following the advice of scouts, the procession reached the vicinity of the palace without serious difficulties. But a squadron of Horse Guards halted the marchers at the Pevchii Bridge across the Moika River, minutes from the square.<sup>13</sup>

The Basil Island Branch was to be joined by the Gavan' Branch and then proceed across the Nikolaevskii Bridge to the palace. While the workers awaited the arrival of the Gavan' contingent, their chairman addressed them: "Comrades! Let us all go to the tsar! I will go first, in the front ranks, and, when we fall, the second ranks will follow. But it cannot be that he would order us shot. . . ."<sup>14</sup> A student tried to speak, but the crowd began to chant, "We do not need students." One of the leaders of the branch, remounting the platform, reminded the workers that everyone suffered under the repressive government, students and gentry as well. "Do not push them away comrades," he urged. "Let all who suffer from the government yoke come with us. . . ."<sup>15</sup> Then Karelina spoke to the women:

Mothers and wives, do not persuade your husbands and brothers to stand apart from the just cause. Go with them. If you are attacked or fired upon, do not scream, do not squeal, help with first aid. Here are arm bands with red crosses. Put them around your sleeves, but not before the shooting starts.<sup>16</sup>

Her words were greeted with cries of "Let's go! Let's go!" from several women. "Everyone must go. Give us the crosses," they cried, stretching out their hands for the arm-bands. One girl turned to a friend in great excitement, "Go, tell mother I will go. It does not matter if they kill me. It is

<sup>13</sup> A. M. Filippov, "9 ianvaria 1905 g."

<sup>14</sup> Gurevich, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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not right that some will be killed while others benefit from it. Everyone, everyone must go."<sup>17</sup> Several additional speakers, among them Karelin, addressed the crowd. Finally one of the leaders proposed singing the Lord's Prayer. "All of the crowd reverently, with serious, thoughtful expressions in their eyes, sang the prayer in unison, frequently crossing themselves. An old man and many women wept. . . ."<sup>18</sup> New crowds replaced the old, and another meeting was opened with the Lord's Prayer.

As the hour for departure drew near, an orator asked the assembled throngs whether they knew why they were going, and the crowd responded, "We know, we know." He instructed them:

Then let us go in firm, tight ranks, without turning back or lagging behind, without shouts and noise. Do not listen to voices from the crowd. Listen only to us, those who will march in the front ranks. No flags! But remember, comrades, do not beat those who carry flags, only take the flags away. . . . Do not pick up leaflets; do not listen to voices from the rear ranks. Go peacefully and reverently. We are marching for a great cause, and we can be proud of this! Who are we? We are lowly workers. Then let us call all who want to come with us; do not push anyone away. Let us go!<sup>19</sup>

By the time the Gavan' Branch had arrived, crowds filled all the adjoining streets. The demonstrators tried to obtain icons and other religious objects from local churches, but the priests refused to lend them to the workers.<sup>20</sup> Finally, two hours before noon, the crowds began to move toward the Neva River.

They had not even reached the bridges over the Neva when the way was barred by infantry and cavalry units.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24. The ministry of justice later reported that prior to the start of the procession workers at the Basil Island Branch chased away some students (1905, document 39, p. 56).

<sup>20</sup> Dmitriev, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaia, p. 31.

Representatives stepped forward from the crowd with white handkerchiefs in their hands. Raising their arms to indicate they were unarmed, the representatives asked permission for the procession to pass.<sup>21</sup> The military commander answered by sending the cossack cavalry to break up the crowd. When that failed, he ordered the infantry into firing position. Although the bugle sounded three calls, no shots were fired.<sup>22</sup> A second attack by horsemen using whips and sabres broke up the main body of demonstrators, and the crowd split into small groups which were dispersed. Some of the demonstrators escaped into side streets and crossed the ice over the Neva. Many of the branch leaders, including Karelin, made it to the river and continued to the square, but they did not arrive until late in the afternoon.<sup>23</sup> The rest of the workers retreated to the branch area where they milled around, frustrated and leaderless, bitterly blaming the troops and chastising themselves for their failure to reach the Winter Palace.

The largest procession, including the workers from the Putilov plant, was to proceed from the Narva Branch under the leadership of Father Gapon. Gapon, who spent the night nearby protected by a large group of devoted followers, showed considerable anxiety about the size of the crowds. When he awoke at about eight in the morning, the branch was already filling with workers. Nevertheless he sent some of his assistants out into the streets to survey the area and gauge the response of the people. They returned with reassuring reports that the enthusiasm and determination of the workers were very high indeed, but they also brought alarming news of troop movements and road-blocks across the bridges. There was no longer any doubt—

<sup>21</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 112; for the military report, see 1905, document 44, p. 66; and for the report of the Fifth Squadron of the Uhlan Guard Regiment, 1905, document 48, p. 76. One of the participants recalled that a "provocatory" shot was fired at the troops and this untied the hands of the officers (see Krasov, "Deviatoe ianvaria").

<sup>23</sup> Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 112.

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to reach the palace the demonstrators would have to force their way through the cordon of troops.<sup>24</sup>

Just before Gapon left to join the crowd at the branch, he was informed that the city governor wanted to talk to him on the telephone at the local precinct office. Suspecting a ruse to arrest him, which undoubtedly it was, Gapon decided not to answer the summons.<sup>25</sup> When he reached the Narva Branch, an immense crowd was already waiting. The large notice announcing the procession still hung on the doors, and the policemen stood at a distance without interfering in preparations for the march.<sup>26</sup> Gapon appeared before the crowd, pale and nervous. Rutenberg approached and, warning of the impending danger, inquired whether Gapon had prepared a plan of action in case the troops opened fire. Rutenberg fully expected a bloody confrontation and suggested a route that would offer the workers their best opportunity for resistance in case the procession was attacked.<sup>27</sup> Gapon seemed to agree passively, but he still intended to conduct the procession along the original route.

Although the procession had been advertised as a religious one—*krestnyi khod*—no specific preparations had been made to ensure a distinctly religious character. Now Gapon instructed his followers to procure various religious objects from a nearby chapel in order to provide the marchers with some formal religious trappings. Among the objects he requested were a chasuble for himself and a cross for him to carry.<sup>28</sup> The Narva workers were more successful

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>25</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 91, and Gurevich, pp. 23-24.

<sup>26</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 93. Gapon interpreted the presence of police and the fact that the notice was not removed from the doors as evidence of the tacit consent of the authorities to the demonstration.

<sup>27</sup> Rutenberg, *Ubiitsvo Gapona*, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Gapon in *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 94, ascribes the initiative to himself, and this is supported by Ianov. Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 320, and by the account in *RR*, no. 60, p. 19. Gurevich, p. 25, however, wrote that the suggestion to obtain religious articles came from the workers. The lawyers' investigating committee found that all workers without exception spoke of the procession as "krestnyi khod." See "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 108.

than the Basil Island contingent had been. They soon returned with two gonfalons, a large cross, and two large icons to be borne at the head of the procession. The portraits of Russian tsars were taken down from the walls of the branch and given to those in the front ranks to carry.<sup>29</sup>

When Gapon was satisfied that the procession had a sufficiently pious and humble appearance, he allowed Rutenberg to address the crowd in his name. Rutenberg, who was known to the workers as a member of the Putilov plant staff, warned the workers that they might come under fire. He then suggested the best route for the march, advised the workers on what to do if the troops opened fire, and even noted locations where arms could be obtained for resistance. His exhortation had little effect on the crowd. Despite the workers' determination to reach the palace at any cost, the idea of opposing the tsar with arms seemed an apostasy to most of them. "Is it possible to go to God with arms? Is it possible to go to the tsar with foul thoughts?" they asked.<sup>30</sup> Although Gapon seemed to approve Rutenberg's words and even discouraged some women and children from going along, he continued to emphasize the peaceful and religious aspect of the procession. After a prayer, a blessing, and a few words of encouragement, Gapon asked his followers whether any of them were carrying arms. On receiving a negative reply, he ended, "All this is well; we will go unarmed to our tsar."<sup>31</sup>

Shortly after eleven o'clock the immense crowd from Narva slowly began to move.<sup>32</sup> The most devoted and determined workers marched in front, holding aloft the large cross, icons, and portraits of the Russian rulers. Slightly be-

<sup>29</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 94, and Ianov, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 320-321.

<sup>30</sup> Rutenberg, *Ubiistvo Gapona*, p. 32. See also *RR*, no. 60, pp. 18-19, and Ianov, in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 321.

<sup>31</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Although all observers described the crowd as enormous, estimates of its size vary. The "Lawyers' report" reported it as between four and five thousand (1905, document 62, p. 107); the police thought the crowd was between two and three thousand (1905, document 36, p. 51); while Gapon (*Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 94) claimed that over twenty thousand marched with him.

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hind was a large banner with the inscription, "Soldiers! Do not shoot at the people!"<sup>33</sup> Father Gapon marched in the second rank, surrounded by his assistants and a bodyguard. He wore an overcoat over his vestments and therefore did not stand out in the crowd. The procession reached the main thoroughfare, Peterhof Chaussee, and turned in the direction of the Narva triumphal arch, erected to welcome the victorious troops returning from the Napoleonic wars. Solemn and dignified, the workers moved at a slow, deliberate pace. Their heads were bared, and they sang prayers in unison—"Our Father," "Save Thy People, O Lord, and Bless Thy Inheritance," and the national anthem, "God Save the Tsar." Church bells, ringing the end of Sunday services, lent increased majesty to the scene, and bright rays of sunshine, unusual in St. Petersburg at that time of year, seemed to convey a providential blessing on the marchers. The crowds of churchgoers either joined the procession or stood reverently on the sidewalks, heads bared, and crossing themselves. Policemen on duty took off their caps and stood at attention; several preceded the procession, diverting traffic from its path.<sup>34</sup> It was a moving spectacle. Few could imagine what awaited the marchers just a few hundred yards ahead.

When the Narva Arch came clearly into view, a line of troops backed by cavalry could be seen barring the approaches to the bridge over the Tarakanovka River just in front of the arch. The front ranks of the procession hesitated momentarily. Some were inclined to seek another route, as Rutenberg suggested, but the leaders and the crowd called on them to proceed straight to the arch. Tightening ranks and singing louder, the procession advanced toward the troops at a faster pace. Suddenly the infantry lines parted to let cavalry through, and a squadron of Horse Grenadier Guards charged the marchers. The crowd gave way, separating to let the mounted troops through. In a

<sup>33</sup> Gurevich, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, and "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 108.

hoarse voice Gapon called on his followers not to waver: "Be brave! Forward, comrades! Freedom or death!"<sup>35</sup> The workers closed ranks again and, still singing, continued to move forward.

The military and police commanders at the Narva Arch had orders not to let the procession cross the bridge. They suspected that Father Gapon might be coming from the Narva region and ordered the cavalry squadron to search the crowd and arrest him, but the troopers were to keep their swords in their scabbards unless they met with resistance. The squadron commander later claimed two shots were fired from the crowd. He also charged that workers hit several of his men with the staffs of their crosses. Provoked, the commander ordered his cavalry squadron to move through the crowd again from the rear with sabres bared. But the crowd again gave way, and there was no need to use sabres. The squadron returned to the bridge, unable to disperse the crowd or locate Father Gapon. Once more the infantry formed a solid line across the road.<sup>36</sup>

Two companies of the Ninety-Third Irkutsk Infantry Regiment now stood facing the advancing crowd with rifles ready. The soldiers were on edge. Having arrived in the capital only a few hours earlier, they had heard rumors of impending disorders and were told the demonstration was a plot instigated by revolutionaries. As they stood nervously facing the advancing crowd, some police officers attempted to intervene and reason with the leaders of the march. At first the crowd hesitated. The police urged them to dis-

<sup>35</sup> Rutenberg, *Ubiistvo Gapona*, p. 33, and Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 94. Interestingly, Gapon's own account of the shooting and what followed depends almost exclusively on information that appeared in various newspapers and on the information collected by the lawyers' committee. As personal recollections, Gapon's account is of very little value.

<sup>36</sup> For the report of the military commander of the contingent at the Narva Arch, see Bonch-Bruevich, "Deviatoe ianvaria 1905 g.," p. 138. Gapon has often been incorrectly portrayed marching in front in full vestments and with a cross in his hand. This, however, was not the case.

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perse, but the workers in front locked arms and, still singing, continued to advance.<sup>37</sup> The officer in charge of the infantry troops ordered the bugler to sound "fire." The call was repeated three times without effect. When the marchers had approached to within two hundred paces, the order to fire was given. The first two volleys were shot into the air, but the crowd stubbornly kept advancing. Then suddenly, aiming directly into the crowd from close range, "the soldiers from Pskov, not comprehending anything and completely losing their heads, fired a volley. . . ." <sup>38</sup> A participant, a worker who belonged to a revolutionary organization and who was among the first ranks of demonstrators, gave the following account:

The crowd moved toward the square at first; then, seeing the soldiers readying their rifles, the leaders began to run toward them, followed by the crowd. Three times the bugle sounded; twice the soldiers fired into the air. The crowd still ran and was almost at the entrance to the bridge when the third volley, fired point-blank at close range, knocked down the gonfalon bearer and the police officer who was trying to halt the procession. Shouts, wails, and groans were heard; the crowd and those of us in the front ranks quickly fell to the ground. The soldiers, due to the confusion or cruelty of their commander, fired seven more volleys into the crowd until both companies, firing in turns, had emptied their clips.<sup>39</sup>

The five volleys fired by the two companies broke up the crowd. According to the report of the commander, over forty dead and wounded were counted.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent mili-

<sup>37</sup> Gurevich, pp. 25-26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26; see also an official report in 1905, document 36, p. 51.

<sup>39</sup> Serebrov, "Ianvarskie dni 1905 goda," pp. 198-199. The author crawled away from the scene but continued on to the city.

<sup>40</sup> 1905, document 36, p. 51. Actually the number of casualties here must have been higher for the official casualty figures give forty-five killed and sixty-five wounded from the Putilov Plant. Most of



tary reports decreased the number of casualties to ten killed and twenty wounded.<sup>41</sup> Among the seriously wounded were two police officers, one of whom soon died. Official accounts at first maintained that the police had been shot by workers,<sup>42</sup> but the lawyers' report placed the policemen in the company of the crowd when the shooting occurred.<sup>43</sup>

After the shooting stopped, the street in front of the bridge was covered with bodies. Some began to crawl away; others remained lying in pools of blood. The rest of the crowd scattered into the side streets, and many continued on their own to Palace Square.<sup>44</sup> Among the injured were many of the bravest, who carried the religious objects and marched in the front ranks. Two bodyguards marching in front of Gapon were killed in the hail of bullets as was the chairman of the Assembly, Vasil'ev, who marched arm in arm with the priest.<sup>45</sup> Gapon, contrary to rumors, was not harmed. Knocked down by the bodies falling around him, he was lying on the ground when the shooting stopped. Rising from the heap of fallen comrades, Gapon stood dazed, in a state of shock, muttering invectives against the perpetrators of the massacre and repeating, as though trying to convince himself, "There is no God any longer. There is no tsar!" The workers standing around him echoed his words.<sup>46</sup>

It was no time for speculation. Gapon's first impulse was to rush back into the street and share the fate of his followers, but Rutenberg persuaded him that his life was much too important to be wasted in a meaningless gesture. With the aid of some followers, Rutenberg quickly removed Gapon from the scene of the shooting. He advised the priest

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these casualties occurred at the Narva Arch (see the list of casualties from Putilov in Okun', ed., *Putilovets v trekh revoliutsiiakh*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>41</sup> 1905, document 37, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, document 36, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, document 62, pp. 110-111. See also Gurevich, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> For example, see Serebrov, p. 199.

<sup>45</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moi zhizni*, pp. 96-97. By one account, Vasil'ev was hit by five bullets (Volynets, "Da zdravstvuet stachka").

<sup>46</sup> *RR*, no. 60, p. 19. This account was most probably written by P. Rutenberg.

to go into hiding immediately and, taking out a combination knife and a small pair of scissors, on the spot cut off some of Gapon's long hair and trimmed his beard. The workers, who stood around their leader with bared heads, reverently caught the falling locks of hair, murmuring, "Holy, holy."<sup>47</sup> Disguised in a worker's coat and cap, Gapon no longer resembled a priest. He meekly surrendered himself to the care of Rutenberg, who moved his charge from one hiding place to another until he ended in the apartment of the writer, Maxim Gorky.

From the moment of the shooting at the Narva Arch, Father Gapon was no longer leading the workers of St. Petersburg. While Rutenberg strove to protect and preserve Gapon for the revolutionary cause, thousands of his faithful followers continued their reverent pilgrimage to the tsar. The shooting at the Narva Arch was to be duplicated more than once in other parts of the city that day. A particularly bloody scene occurred at Troitskaia Square, by the Peter-Paul Fortress, where the processions from the Vyborg and Petersburg Branches were to meet. When Varnashev, chairman of the Vyborg Branch, realized that troops were blocking the Troitskii Bridge, he instructed all workers arriving at the branch before eleven o'clock to proceed to the palace on their own. In this way most of the Vyborg workers were able to reach the square. Those arriving later, several hundred workers, set off shortly after eleven to join the procession from the Petersburg Branch on Troitskaia Square as previously planned.

As soon as he was informed of its approach, the military commander at Troitskaia Square sent out squadrons of uhlans to disperse the procession. Sabres drawn, the uhlans rode through the crowd and back again three times, trampling demonstrators in their path. The cavalry was only

<sup>47</sup> Rutenberg, *Ubiistvo Gapon*, p. 35. Compare Rutenberg's account with an eyewitness account by Safonov, *Leningradskaia pravda*, January 22, 1925. The accounts of *RR*, no. 60 and of Safonov do not represent Gapon as the coward that Rutenberg was later to make him out to be.

partially successful in breaking up the demonstration. After each attack the workers regrouped and continued on their way. Varnashev, surveying the scene after a cavalry charge, saw about twenty bodies lying in the street amidst the debris of caps and torn pieces of clothing. He was relieved when, after a minute, "even they were getting up and crawling away."<sup>48</sup> Some no doubt left and went home while others, including Varnashev, decided to by-pass the bridges and proceed to the palace directly across the ice. Many managed to reach Troitskaia Square where they were again halted, this time by three companies of Pavlovskii Guards blocking the approaches to the bridge. At first the officers and the police tried to disperse the crowd with persuasion and threats. When these measures failed, infantry units with their bayonets poised moved in to thin out the crowd. Shortly after noon, the commander received news that another enormous crowd, estimated to be between fifteen and twenty thousand strong and led by Father Gapon himself, was moving along the Kamennooostrovskii Prospect toward the bridge.<sup>49</sup>

The approaching procession from the Petersburg Branch was particularly large because many onlookers had joined along the way. The procession left the branch for the meeting on Troitskaia Square at exactly noon, just as the cannon from the Peter-Paul Fortress fired the midday salute. The leaders of the branch, arms locked, marched in the front rank toward the Kamennooostrovskii Prospect. When the marchers turned onto the broad boulevard, they completely flooded the street, and passers-by were hard put to avoid joining them. As the number of marchers swelled, the procession no longer resembled an orderly formation. Marchers simply walked along in a huge mass. Many onlookers walked with them, including such members of the intelli-

<sup>48</sup> Account of Varnashev, "Ot nachala do kontsa s gaponovskoi organizatsiei," p. 207; and Gurevich, p. 28.

<sup>49</sup> From the report of the military commander in Drezen, p. 92. The police report is given in 1905, document 38, pp. 53-54.

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gentsia as Lenin's sister, Anna. Writer Maxim Gorky watched from the square.<sup>50</sup>

The approach of this enormous crowd alarmed the commander on the square. Having failed to disperse the considerably smaller group from the Vyborg Branch, he was now faced with a massive crowd supposedly led by Gapon. He immediately ordered the Pavlovskii Guards to form a line facing the oncoming crowd and kept a company of Grenadier Guards behind in reserve.<sup>51</sup> As the soldiers stood with their rifles poised, a police officer approached the crowd and ordered the marchers to halt. He repeated the order three times, warning that the troops would open fire if the crowd refused to stop. Some of the workers began to argue with him, saying they were unarmed and meant no harm. A few unbuttoned their coats to show no arms were hidden and, baring their chests, shouted: "Then shoot, if you want to."<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile the back rows of marchers continued to press forward, relentlessly driving those in front toward the troops. As one witness explained, "We could not have stopped even if we wanted to because the back rows could

<sup>50</sup> A. Elizarova-Ul'ianova, "Iz proshlogo," p. 88. Maxim Gorky left several accounts of the dispersal of the crowds from around the Vyborg Branch. He recorded his impressions in a letter to his wife written immediately after the events (see the letter to Peshkova of January 9, 1905, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 28, p. 347). Later Gorky elaborated on the events in *Zhizn' Klima Samgina*. A fragment from the projected "Savva Morozov" (published posthumously in *Oktiabr'*, no. 6, 1941) gave an account of similar events and portrayed Bolsheviks as the instigators.

<sup>51</sup> Military commanders estimated the crowd to be over twenty thousand (see the log of the Pavlovskii Regiment in Drezen, p. 92; also the regimental commander's report in 1905, document 47, p. 75). The Okhrana estimated the crowd at four thousand (1905, document 37, p. 52), and the ministry of the interior at three thousand (1905, document 39, p. 56). All these reports mention the presence of Gapon among the demonstrators even though Gapon was not there. Pavlovskii Regiment units were under strength that day, and the three companies facing the oncoming crowd numbered only 120 riflemen (see 1905, document 44, note on p. 67, and document 38, p. 54).

<sup>52</sup> A report of a police officer is in 1905, document 38, p. 54.

not see what was happening ahead and pressed on the front ranks."<sup>53</sup>

According to the testimonies of survivors, the crowd halted at the police officer's command, and several of the march leaders fell on their knees before him, opening their coats and turning out their pockets to show they were unarmed. The officer walked over to one of them and took a piece of paper from his hands, probably a copy of the petition. Meanwhile a bugle call sounded. The crowd apparently thought the police officer moved aside, out of the line of fire, to let them pass. Those who were talking with him followed, still pleading, and the crowd surged after them.<sup>54</sup> Just then the first volley was fired. Stunned, the crowd stopped. Most of the marchers did not understand what was happening. At first they thought the shots were blanks, but two more volleys cut through their tight ranks, and, with cries of pain and horror, the crowd began to scatter in panic. The uhlans charged after the terrified demonstrators, swinging their sabres ruthlessly.

Official figures put the number of killed and wounded on Troitskaia Square at forty.<sup>55</sup> Witnesses who helped to gather up the dead and wounded claimed forty-eight were killed and about one hundred wounded.<sup>56</sup> They carried the victims to nearby Peter-Paul Hospital. Among the casualties were many spectators, members of the propertied classes, intelligentsia, women and children. Few survivors of the shooting on Troitskaia Square reached the Winter Palace, where another bloody drama was unfolding.

To prevent the marchers from reaching their final destination, the square in front of the Winter Palace, elite guard units were called to duty there: eight companies of the Pavlovskii Guard Regiment, three companies of the famous

<sup>53</sup> Protchenko, in Zelikson-Bobrovskiaia, p. 24.

<sup>54</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, pp. 112-113; and Gurevich, pp. 28-29.

<sup>55</sup> 1905, document 44, p. 67. The police report estimated that about five were killed and ten seriously wounded (1905, document 38, p. 54).

<sup>56</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 113.

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Preobrazhenskii Guard Regiment, four squadrons of the Chevalier Guards, four squadrons of the Horse Guards and two hundred Cossacks from His Majesty's Convoy. According to some witnesses several artillery pieces were brought into position on the square.<sup>57</sup> The first contingent of troops was posted on the square before nine in the morning, and the main body was in position by eleven when crowds began to gather in the adjoining streets. The troops immediately formed lines to block the access routes to the immense square and dispersed those who managed to thread a path through the cordon, particularly on the side of the square bordering the Aleksandrovskii Garden.

No amount of persuasion could compel the demonstrators to leave. They gave ground only when the troops broke into their ranks by force, and, once dispersed, the demonstrators quickly reassembled elsewhere. Despite occasional taunts directed at the soldiers, *on the whole the crowd remained orderly*. The tenor of their remarks was that the workers had not come to make trouble, but rather to "seek their rights and justice."<sup>58</sup> When some agitators tried to make inflammatory speeches, they were stopped and told, "We did not come here for this. We are not 'trouble makers.'"<sup>59</sup> Once they had reached the area of the square, the demonstrators seemed completely confident that the tsar would see them. The imperial standard was flying over the palace, indicating the presence of the emperor in the capital. When told the tsar had remained in Tsarskoe Selo, the workers replied, "He will send someone to receive the deputies and the petition."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> The table for the disposition of troops on January 9 is given in 1905, document 34, p. 49. A number of witnesses reported seeing artillery pieces on the square; for example, see L. Protchenko and V. Pakhomov, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, pp. 22 and 29 respectively.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted from a letter by a lawyer, in Kondrat'ev and Raschetnova, p. 80. This letter first appeared in *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 66 (1905), p. 271.

<sup>59</sup> Rozorenov, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted from a telegram sent by the writer Zhdanov to Nicholas II, 1905, document 53, p. 82, and "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 115. Mintslov "Dnevnik," p. 10, also mentions the imperial standard over the Winter Palace.

The atmosphere on Palace Square could not remain calm for long. Soon news of the massacres on the outskirts began circulating, and marchers from the broken-up processions straggled in with their gory tales. There were those who could show the scars of battle: sabre cuts on their coats, bloodstains from fallen comrades, their own wounds and bruises. The news reverberated through the crowd; jeering at the troops increased, but the demonstrators held themselves back, waiting for the appointed hour when Gapon was to appear at the head of the religious procession (*krestnyi khod*) to present the petition to the tsar. The workers had been prepared for sacrifices, and they could rationalize the scattered attacks during the morning. As one observer wrote, "The workers were saying, 'Well, in the suburbs we were pushing our way through. The soldiers were ordered to fire. Let them. That's their business. God will be their judge.'"<sup>61</sup> But shootings in front of the palace seemed inconceivable without the express order of the tsar, and the workers refused to believe their ruler would shoot down unarmed petitioners in front of his palace. If he refused to hear their pleas, they were ready to live up to the words of the petition and "die on this square before Thy palace," but they could not believe the "little father" would be so heartless.

As the hour approached, a hush fell over the square. The troops stopped their maneuvers, and the crowd craned their necks to catch sight of the procession on Nevskii Prospect. Two o'clock struck, but the procession did not appear, and the tsar was nowhere to be seen. Ominous silence. Within minutes the military commander decided to clear the crowds, beginning with those gathered on the sidewalk in front of the Aleksandrovskii Garden. A composite company of the Preobrazhenskii Guard (a regimental training unit consisting of sixty-eight enlisted men) backed by cavalry was ordered into action. The company fixed bayonets and advanced, but the crowd refused to budge. Some

<sup>61</sup> From the Zhdanov telegram, 1905, document 53, p. 83.

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demonstrators clung to the fence; others climbed on top or over into the park; a few youngsters perched in the trees to get a better view. This time, when the officer threatened to give the order to shoot, the response was a defiant, "Go ahead and shoot." The demonstrators began appealing to the soldiers, explaining why they had come and what they were trying to accomplish. Fearful lest his men be influenced by their words, the commander hastened to move his unit back about a hundred and twenty paces. The cavalry then tried to disperse the crowd using whips and the flats of their sabres, but the commotion only attracted more demonstrators, who rushed into the garden to see what was happening. The situation seemed deadlocked when the commander received a direct order from the commander of the Guard, Prince Vasil'chikov, to open fire if necessary.

Unaware of this new development, the crowds continued to answer the warnings with taunts and shouts. Finally the officer ordered his company into firing position. Seeing the rifles pointed at them, some workers fell to their knees; others took off their caps and crossed themselves; none moved from their places. When the bugle had sounded for the third time, the company fired one volley into the crowd and, making a half turn, fired a second round. The crowd ran for shelter in the adjoining streets, leaving about thirty killed and wounded on the ground. Among the casualties were the youngsters who had climbed the trees for a better look and some Sunday afternoon strollers in the garden.<sup>62</sup>

The shooting on the square shattered any lingering hopes of a hearing from the tsar. People stood with bare heads, watching as the dead and dying were carried through the streets, and asking in disbelief, "How could they shoot

<sup>62</sup> From the report of the military commander, 1905, document 40, p. 59. Of the sixty-eight rifles in the composite company, eight were not loaded; see note 14, on p. 811. The same note states that the officer ordered his men to "remove" (*sniat'*) some children from the trees. It is not clear whether this meant simply telling them to climb down or shooting them down, as is often implied in the literature. See also the description of the shooting in "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 115.



down honest toilers who humbly came to seek the protection of the tsar?"<sup>63</sup> At first the demonstrators were shocked into numb passivity, but soon the crowds exploded with spontaneous indignation: "The crowd, shivering from cold on the streets of St. Petersburg, suddenly boiled with anger and, forsaking all fear, began to rage."<sup>64</sup> They roared through the neighboring streets, breaking windows and attacking officials in uniform, particularly officers, some of whom were beaten within sight of their troops. Several officers and policemen, including a retired general,<sup>65</sup> suffered severe beatings. On the streets where only hours before the demonstrators had reverently waited for their tsar, revolutionary speakers were greeted with applause and red flags began to wave.

It was almost three o'clock when Lieutenant Colonel Riman, who was to become notorious as the pacifier of the Moscow uprising in December of 1905, was ordered to disperse the crowds in the streets around the square. With two companies of the Semenovskii Guards, he advanced toward Nevskii Prospect along Morskaia Street, clearing the street and rescuing several officers in the process. He had difficulty dispersing the mobs swirling around the troops. "The crowd would not calm down," he reported. "They threatened, threw stones, bottles and sticks, swore, and behaved extremely provocatively and outrageously."<sup>66</sup> Reaching the Nevskii Prospect at the Politseiskii Bridge, he found his units completely surrounded by the threatening mob. He was reluctant to fire into the crowded prospect, fearing military units operating behind the crowd might be hit.<sup>67</sup> The nearby side street, where people were packed against a wall, presented a better target, and he ordered one platoon to line up facing the crowd on the opposite bank of the Moika River. The bugle warnings did not move the crowd,

<sup>63</sup> Kondrat'ev and Raschetnova, p. 81.

<sup>64</sup> Gurevich, p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> 1905, document 44, p. 69.

<sup>66</sup> Colonel Riman's report in 1905, document 45, p. 71.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71. Similar considerations prevented at least one other commander from firing at a crowd, *ibid.*, document 40, p. 61.

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and even the first volley failed to disperse them. According to one witness, the crowd was so dense in the narrow street that it was impossible to move, but the second volley sent people flying in all directions.<sup>68</sup> Five or six casualties were left in the street. The crowds across the bridge and on Nevskii Prospect became even more outraged after the shootings and would not disperse. The colonel even reported two pistol shots fired at him. With stubborn determination he moved two platoons into firing position, and each of these fired two more volleys before the crowd was broken up, leaving more dead and wounded lying on the street.<sup>69</sup>

For several hours, until darkness and exhaustion forced workers to retreat to their quarters, the mobs surged from one place to another. All afternoon the central part of St. Petersburg was virtually in a state of open rebellion, but the workers were leaderless and had no plan to follow. They vented their frustrations by breaking windows and throwing stones and debris at the soldiers, but little else was accomplished. The crowds would mill around until a patrol arrived, then disperse and reassemble elsewhere. There was a tendency among the more conservatively inclined workers to blame the revolutionaries for spoiling the procession, and scattered attacks were made on students and those suspected of being revolutionaries. No doubt these attacks were abetted by the police, and military patrols occasionally vented their anger on particular groups and individuals as well. At about six o'clock a crowd began piling park benches across Nevskii Prospect in front of Kazan Square. When the next military patrol came by, the crowd dispersed, and the benches were returned to the watchman of Kazan Cathedral.<sup>70</sup> After dark, minor disorders, including some looting, continued, but this was largely the work of criminal elements whose primary targets were liquor stores.

<sup>68</sup> Goncharov, "Ianvarskie dni 1905 g. v Peterburge," p. 159.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160; Riman's report, 1905, document 45, p. 71; and "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, pp. 116-117.

<sup>70</sup> 1905, document 40, p. 60.

Despite their dire prognostications, the revolutionaries were completely unprepared to take advantage of the situation. They were prepared to make speeches and wave red flags, but not to organize the raging crowd for effective resistance to the troops. Their speeches were superfluous; the crowds were already inflamed. As a Bolshevik representative to the Third Party Congress reported:

We were able to hold meetings in many locations in St. Petersburg, but they were of a disorganized and incidental nature. On the Nevskii and in the vicinity of the Winter Palace the mood after twelve noon was so intense and determined that agitation was completely unnecessary. From 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. I walked along the Nevskii with our agitators looking for a crowd in need of inflammatory speeches. We could not find such a crowd. The words were out of place there.<sup>71</sup>

Basil Island was one of the few areas where those with revolutionary leanings, in this case some students from the nearby university, were able to mobilize the militant workers for resistance. The procession from the Basil Island Branch, dispersed without shooting, had retreated to the area of the clubhouse. Most of the leaders were absent, having managed to find a way to the palace over the ice. The workers milling around the branch were left undisturbed because the official orders did not call for troop action beyond blocking the bridges. About fifteen hundred embittered and very frustrated workers stood around the branch not knowing what to do next. Whereas before the procession this crowd had chased away students eager to join them, now they were willing to hear radical speakers and follow the students.

The students who became involved with the Basil Island workers represented various parties. According to the account of one of their leaders, D. Gimer,<sup>72</sup> he and his group

<sup>71</sup> *Tretii s'ezd RSDRP*, p. 545.

<sup>72</sup> Gimer, "9 ianvaria 1905 g. v S. Peterburge. Vospominaniia," pp. 3ff.

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attended a meeting at the branch earlier in the week and spoke out against the march and the petition to the crowds present. Gimer and his group decided to go along with the march as observers, but not to participate unless an opportunity for agitation presented itself. On the eve of the demonstration, Gimer and his friends ran off a Bolshevik leaflet just in case an opportunity to use it presented itself.

On Sunday the students joined the marchers just as the procession was broken up by cavalry charges. They retreated back to the branch with the workers and began making speeches and handing out leaflets. Someone from the clubhouse announced that Father Gapon had been wounded and was probably under arrest. At first the crowd swore vengeance and damned the tsar, but as hours passed the workers lost some of their élan and became visibly bored. The moment for action seemed to be slipping by, as Gimer wrote: "Spirits waned and many began to leave. It was necessary to rekindle the spirit of the people, to keep them occupied in order to avoid a complete failure . . . it would be good to arm them, to give them confidence in themselves."<sup>73</sup> Just then a young teenager covered with blood arrived like a messenger in an ancient drama to tell of the shooting on Palace Square.<sup>74</sup>

The crowd was once more on its feet and ready to act. Gimer, or someone else in his group, suggested they arm themselves, and someone remembered a side-arm shop located nearby. The crowd set off immediately, but in its excitement headed in the wrong direction. Gimer and a Menshevik student had to run around several blocks to get to the head of the mob and turn it in the proper direction.<sup>75</sup> The Shaf Side-Arm Shop was quickly ransacked, but all the workers found were a few daggers and about thirty sword blades without handles. Just then troops arrived, and the workers beat a hasty retreat. On the way they stopped to

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> From an account in *Iskra*, no. 85, p. 5. This account closely parallels that of Gimer with some differences in emphasis.

<sup>75</sup> Gimer, p. 5.

disarm several policemen and officers. One officer voluntarily unbuckled his belt and surrendered his sword; another Cossack colonel, who tried to resist at first, found a sword blade pressed against his throat. When the colonel gave up his sword, the workers politely helped him put on his coat.<sup>76</sup>

Back at the branch the crowd went to work in earnest building barricades in the street in front of the clubhouse. They brought various materials from a house being constructed next door. Several sawed down telegraph posts and strung wire in front of the barricades to impede cavalry movement. A national tricolor was brought, the two top stripes were torn off and the remaining red stripe was raised on top of the barricade. The workers went at their tasks soberly. When a young student began breaking street lamps, "a serious-looking worker who was sawing down a telegraph pole gave him a hard box on the ear and told him, 'Do not create disorder here. The people are busy, they are demanding their rights, and you are smashing lamps!'"<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile Gimer and his group set about preparing for the inevitable arrival of the troops. Bricks were piled up as ammunition, and a makeshift first-aid station was arranged. The students took over a print shop and put out a leaflet calling workers to join the resistance. The workers took these leaflets willingly and listened to the revolutionary speeches, joining in the shouts, "Long live the Social Democratic Republic!"<sup>78</sup>

The police authorities later complained that the refusal of the military commanders to follow police instructions led to the erection of barricades. Local police officers repeatedly requested that troops be dispatched to disperse the crowds near the Basil Island Branch, but the commander of the military units replied that he only had orders to block access to the bridges and was not authorized to disperse stray crowds. Not until late in the afternoon were military

<sup>76</sup> *Iskra*, no. 85, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Gimer, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> From the account of a witness in Kondrat'ev and Raschetnova, p. 89.

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units placed under direct police control.<sup>79</sup> It was close to three o'clock when the colonel of the Finnish Guard Regiment received orders to report with his two companies to the gendarmes officer for instructions. Lieutenant Colonel Galle of the gendarmes ordered that the barricades be removed. He indicated that the troops could expect resistance from the workers and revolutionaries manning the barricades and further instructed the guards officer, "Warn your lower ranks not to get confused if they meet a priest in a cassock because this will be a student masquerading as a priest."<sup>80</sup> With this simple ruse the colonel, thinking Gapon might be near the branch, hoped to overcome the soldiers' reluctance to fire at a priest. Two companies of infantry and a squadron of uhlans were dispatched to clear the barricades.

This delay in the dispatch of troops gave the revolutionaries and the workers ample time to complete their preparations. When the units finally arrived, the barricades of furniture, fences, barrels, and construction material intertwined with telephone wire stood nearly nine feet high. The largest was in front of the Assembly branch, and the street had been thoroughly strung with wire to temporarily hold off the troops. A worker had been sent to the city to make it known that barricades were being erected on Basil Island and appeal for aid.

When the military units arrived, their commander dispatched a contingent to an adjoining street while the infantry approached directly down the street in front of the barricades. The soldiers began tearing down the wire entanglements. When they came into firing range, the officer called on those behind the barricades to disperse. A stream of abuse, bricks, and appeals to the soldiers to join the workers was the only answer. After more warnings and bugle signals, the commander ordered the sounding of the call to fire. Behind the barricades, Gimer immediately took

<sup>79</sup> Report of the city governor in Valk, p. 45.

<sup>80</sup> From a report of the military commander in Drezen, p. 93.

steps to clear everyone out of the danger area. The defenders hid in nearby houses, and several pistol shots were fired at the troops.<sup>81</sup> Workers were still scurrying to shelter when a group of female students appeared and, seeing the workers running away, began to chide them for cowardice. The girls were quickly pulled off the street, but their appearance caused some confusion. Gimer recalled, "One old man, who lost his presence of mind due to the appeals of the girls, remained on the street. Before we could get him away, shots were fired and he fell dead."<sup>82</sup>

As the soldiers began dismantling the barricades, the workers hurled bricks from the windows of adjacent houses. Just as the troops reached the main barricade and Gimer was preparing to greet them with more bricks from houses behind the fortifications, a stranger arrived from Palace Square where he had witnessed the shootings. All Gimer knew was that the man was a Jewish Social Democrat recently freed from jail. Visibly shaken by what he had seen, the stranger excitedly related how he and his comrades had picked up the dead and wounded. Then suddenly, losing control of himself in a fit of hysteria, he broke loose from the restraining arms of the workers and rushed to the barricade. There he addressed the soldiers, calling on them to join the insurrection. He continued to speak for nearly five minutes, defying the officer's efforts to stop him, until the commander ordered several soldiers to throw him off the barricades with bayonets.<sup>83</sup>

When the soldiers had dismantled the barricades sufficiently for the cavalry to advance, the workers in the house under construction let loose a shower of bricks. Then, feeling nothing could be done, Gimer and his fellow revolutionaries left.<sup>84</sup> The troops proceeded along the street clearing away other obstacles. A police report mentioned two

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92. The officers involved in action on Basil Island were later interviewed and their reports published in "K istorii 9 ianvaria 1905 goda," *KA*, vol. 4-5 (11-12), 1925, pp. 444-448.

<sup>82</sup> Gimer, pp. 9-10.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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more barricades in the area, though the military reported removing about fifteen obstacles.<sup>85</sup> The troops encountered several small pockets of resistance, and at another barricade on the Mal'yi Prospekt several shots were fired at them. The troops replied with three volleys, and, when the shooting stopped, two corpses were found behind the barricade.<sup>86</sup>

Troops continued to patrol the streets for the remainder of the day, arresting suspicious persons and preventing crowds from gathering. The demonstrators made several more attempts to disarm policemen and even attempted to attack a police station, but without success.<sup>87</sup> After dark the crowd thinned out although isolated incidents of breaking into stores and pillaging occurred during the night. Although the revolutionaries accused the government of encouraging such criminal activities in order to sow fear of the lower classes among the propertied estates, rightist opinion blamed the workers. In the Basil Island area a total of one hundred and sixty-three persons were detained "for looting and armed resistance."<sup>88</sup>

The erection of the barricades has been presented in the revolutionary tradition as a glorious deed of the people rising to insurrection. A recent Soviet publication exclaims, "Workers began to arm themselves. Here on the streets of Petersburg they heroically repulsed the attacks of soldiers and cossacks."<sup>89</sup> The Menshevik paper *Iskra* ran a picture of a member of their organization—a sister of a former member of the populist *Narodnaia volia* party—who allegedly died the next day of wounds inflicted while defending the barricades. Her last words were said to have been, "I do not regret for a moment that I went to the barri-

<sup>85</sup> 1905, document 61, p. 103; and Drezen, p. 95.

<sup>86</sup> Drezen, p. 95.

<sup>87</sup> 1905, document 39, p. 56.

<sup>88</sup> 1905, document 44, p. 67, and particularly note 19, p. 812.

<sup>89</sup> Ponomarev, ed., *Istoriia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza* (1959), p. 79. See also Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Istoriia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, vol. II, p. 26, and Pankratova, *Pervaiia russkaia revoliutsiia 1905-1907 gg.*, 2nd ed., pp. 64-65.



cadets."<sup>90</sup> Lenin wrote an unpublished article entitled "The Battle on the Barricades" which quoted French newspapers and spoke of hundreds of workers killed in the assaults.<sup>91</sup> The appearance of the barricades on Basil Island was an important event in itself, but they represented more a symbolic gesture than a serious attempt at resistance. The opportunity created by the turbulent mood of the crowds and the lack of initiative on the part of the authorities was exploited by the revolutionary students for a time, but once the troops arrived, resistance simply ceased.

It is surprising that the revolutionaries were not able to exploit the situation to a fuller extent. The crowds were unruly and extremely militant; the situation created by the shooting of the workers was considerably more explosive than anything the revolutionaries had expected; and the troops were temporarily otherwise occupied. Yet no major resistance occurred. A Bolshevik commentator recalled how he rushed to Basil Island as soon as he heard about the barricades, expecting to find the workers in open insurrection. Instead he found "two or three youngsters walking inside the strong point with revolvers and sabres. Judging from the evidence, this was a juvenile prank (*detskaia zabava*)."<sup>92</sup> The Bolshevik representative from St. Petersburg told the Third Party Congress, "On Basil Island the crowd, having sacked a used metal goods shop, armed itself with old sabres. This presented a sorry spectacle."<sup>93</sup>

In the evening the officials charged with maintaining security in the city gathered in the office of the minister of the interior. Present from the military were the commander of the First Army Corps, General-Adjutant Meiendorf, who represented the district commander, and the chief-of-staff of the district, General Meshetich. Also present were the assistant minister of the interior, Durnovo, and the chief-

<sup>90</sup> *Iskra*, no. 85, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Lenin, "Bitva na barrikadakh," was later published in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, pp. 228-229, and note 90, p. 457.

<sup>92</sup> Lebedev, "Krovavoe voskres'e."

<sup>93</sup> *Tretii s'ezd RSDRP*, p. 545.

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of-staff of the Corps of Gendarmes, A. A. Dediulin. They were all very angry with General Fullon, who was yet to arrive. When the general appeared, looking exhausted and dismayed, blaming the delay on the troubles at the barricades on Basil Island, he tendered his resignation. Sviatopolk-Mirskii refused to accept Fullon's offer to resign until the events of the day had been discussed in full.<sup>94</sup>

The meeting opened with a debate over who gave the orders to fire. These orders were supposed to originate with the city governor, who had to bear full responsibility for the consequences. General Fullon defended himself, explaining that firing had occurred almost simultaneously in several places making it impossible to maintain direct control over the actions of the troops. Since the military had taken over the role of the police on this occasion, he continued, his own authority was in effect suspended. Fullon also pointed out that he had recommended proclaiming martial law so that all questions of authority would have been clear. Durnovo then suggested that the principal cause of the debacle was in the selection of troops rather than in the chains of command. In his opinion, the cavalry could have effectively dispersed the workers using only whips. General Meshetich defended the selection of military units and continued:

Concerning the shootings, these are unavoidable when troops are summoned. Did you summon them for a parade? There are definite regulations concerning this matter. If the crowd, despite three warnings, does not wish to disperse and continues to press against the troops, the designated signals are given and then the troops open fire. . . .<sup>95</sup>

At this point General Trepov arrived with instructions from the emperor reestablishing the post of governor general for

<sup>94</sup> Liubimov, "Gapon i 9 ianvaria," p. 117. Liubimov was present at the meeting as the recorder.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

St. Petersburg and naming Trepov himself to the position. With Trepov in full command, there was nothing more for the assembled officials to do, and Sviatopolk-Mirskii adjourned the meeting.<sup>96</sup>

Bloody Sunday shocked the world. Stories of the massacres covered the front pages of the international press, and the accounts were highly exaggerated.<sup>97</sup> The *Daily Mail* reported thirty thousand casualties, and the *Manchester Guardian* gave the figure of twenty-four thousand killed and wounded.<sup>98</sup> Some correspondents inadvertently transmitted inflated rumors circulating in St. Petersburg; other accounts were pure fabrication. The most sensational descriptions appeared in the French press and were reprinted in other papers. The Russian underground press also relied on foreign papers for information. For example, the newspaper of the Jewish Bund printed a story from *Le Temps* in which the witness being interviewed claimed to have visited only fifteen of the forty-six hospitals in St. Petersburg and counted 2,195 corpses in these hospitals alone.<sup>99</sup>

The conservative press and supporters of the regime in Russia were highly incensed by the overdrawn accounts in the foreign press. Several French correspondents were given official warnings. The conservative *Novoe vremia* chided the foreign press for sensationalism and deliberate falsification—*lgut v zapuski: kto kogo obgonit* ("They compete in lying: who will beat whom"). It accused a French correspondent of writing "eyewitness" accounts without

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>97</sup> At first the foreign press referred to January 9 as "Vladimir's Day," or "St. Vladimir's Day," after the uncle of the tsar who was in nominal command of troops of the St. Petersburg military region. Jean Jaurès called it *le dimanche rouge* ("Red Sunday"), but the term did not stick. Only gradually did the designation "Bloody Sunday" become accepted. Dillon of the *Daily Telegraph* (London) claimed to have originated it (*The Eclipse of Russia*, p. 157).

<sup>98</sup> The *Manchester Guardian* apologized for these figures later, blaming an error in transmission. The figures should have been "two thousand killed and four thousand wounded" (*Manchester Guardian*, January 30, 1905, p. 7).

<sup>99</sup> *Poslednie izvestiia*, no. 215, 16/3 February, 1905, p. 7.

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ever leaving his hotel room and blamed the English papers for describing horrors "which even the British themselves did not perpetrate in India and Ireland."<sup>100</sup> Grand Duke Vladimir made similar charges and told the reporter from the Associated Press, "I have read the accounts in the foreign press, and I stood aghast at the frightful story of the butchery."<sup>101</sup> The *Times* (London) editor, while criticizing the Russian government, felt obliged to add, "Our readers will remember that all the more graphic accounts of the scenes in the streets . . . were derived from French sources";<sup>102</sup> and the American ambassador to Russia, Robert McCormick, reported to his government that the events had been "grossly exaggerated . . . criminally exaggerated and exploited by the foreign press."<sup>103</sup>

In addition to the dispatches from foreign correspondents, there was no dearth of eyewitness accounts. These accounts, many of which were contradictory, based on rumors, or simply products of the imagination, usually reflected the tremendous psychological strain imposed on the participants. Most accounts described Father Gapon himself present at the mass shooting in front of the Winter Palace and insisted that firing began without warning. A well-known British historian even provided a description of the procession with Father Gapon riding on horseback at its head!<sup>104</sup> Particular scenes of horror were indelibly imprinted in the witnesses' minds: the initial shock of troops firing on an unarmed religious procession; the bodies falling; the casualties lying on the ground; and, invariably, the women and children slaughtered. These stories were endlessly repeated, each time with some embellishment, until the participants themselves were not sure what they had seen with their own eyes.

<sup>100</sup> *Novoe vremia*, January 16, 1905, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Grand Duke Vladimir in *The Times* (London), February 2, 1905, p. 3. The interview originally appeared in the *New York Daily Tribune*, February 1, 1905, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> *The Times* (London), February 2, 1905.

<sup>103</sup> From the dispatches of the American minister to Russia, report of 18/31 January, 1905, p. 8.

<sup>104</sup> Cole, *The Second International*, p. 447.

The recollections of V. Goncharov, a worker and member of a revolutionary organization, illustrate this confusion. Goncharov and his companions marched from the Narva region and got as far as the Moika River, where they were fired upon. They helped remove the dead and wounded from the scene and took part in the assault on the old, retired general who happened to be passing by. Goncharov described the difficulties of reconstructing the afternoon's happenings on the basis of eyewitness accounts. After dark he and his comrades met to share their experiences. Over twenty of them had been involved in the shootings at the same place, yet their attempts to reconstruct in detail what had happened that day proved futile. Each related various incidents which were then reinterpreted in a different light by those who had been standing nearby. Some simply could not account for periods of total blankness in their memories. One worker, for example, could not remember how he got from his original place on the bridge to the opposite corner of the street. They could not even determine how many volleys were fired, how long the shooting lasted, or whether rapid firing had been used. Some thought the firing went on for over an hour; others believed it lasted only a few minutes.<sup>105</sup>

Though the workers could not trust their own perceptions, they were unwilling to rely on official statistics and regarded all official casualty lists with suspicion. The immediate difficulties encountered by the authorities in dealing with the mistrustful public were graphically described by Doctor A. M. Argun of Obukhov Hospital, where many of the first casualties were brought.<sup>106</sup> In a secret memorandum issued several days earlier, hospitals were instructed to prepare supplies and facilities for possible mass treatment on Sunday of wounded patients.<sup>107</sup> The Obukhov Hos-

<sup>105</sup> Goncharov, pp. 159-160, 164.

<sup>106</sup> Argun, "Zhertvy 9/22 ianvaria 1905 goda (vospominaniia)," and appendix giving lists of wounded and dead.

<sup>107</sup> Although a secret memorandum to hospitals seems to imply sinister intentions, such preparations were routine. Whenever troops were called out to deal with mass unrest, hospitals were automatically notified to prepare for possible emergency treatment of casualties.

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pital, located in the central part of the city, organized several teams composed of a doctor and two nurses trained to administer first-aid on the streets. Special facilities were also set up at the hospital to expedite emergency treatment. Immediately after the shooting on Palace Square, the wounded victims began arriving in small groups. Those not requiring further treatment were given first-aid and dismissed without registration in order to cut red tape and save the patients from police harassment. Similar procedures were followed by the first-aid teams on the street. In the evening the bodies of the dead began arriving at the hospital, and by the end of the day a total of seventy-eight wounded and thirty-four dead had been registered.<sup>108</sup>

The grief stricken relatives, friends, and bystanders who brought the casualties to the hospital often remained there awaiting news. They were joined by constantly shifting crowds of harried people running desperately from hospital to hospital seeking missing relatives and friends. The halls of the hospital became so overcrowded that hospital personnel had difficulty moving about, but a police attempt to disperse the crowd caused a near riot. When the hospital authorities announced that there were only about thirty dead on the premises, the crowd furiously accused them of deliberately concealing corpses. Many insisted that they themselves had carried more than thirty bodies to the hospital.<sup>109</sup> Emotions ran so high that the hospital administration appointed a special representative to answer inquiries from the crowd and arrange visits for relatives of wounded patients. The hospital administration also promised to provide a list of all dead and wounded in all the hospitals of St. Petersburg. By the next morning, a list of 265 wounded and 53 dead had been posted,<sup>110</sup> but this incomplete list further exasperated the crowd. When the director of the hospital attempted to speak, the enraged mob lunged at him, and

<sup>108</sup> Argun, p. 17.

<sup>109</sup> A good account of the mood and activity of the crowd in a hospital is given in Goncharov, pp. 161-163.

<sup>110</sup> Argun, p. 19.

only a quick retreat behind a door saved him from injury. Finally, to convince the crowd that no corpses were hidden in the basement or elsewhere, several representatives were allowed to inspect all areas of the hospital. Even this measure failed to mollify the disgruntled workers.<sup>111</sup>

The total number of casualties from all the incidents on Bloody Sunday was actually far lower than might be expected, given the number of volleys fired from extremely close range and the density of the crowds. Goncharov expressed surprise at the comparatively few casualties at the Moika River, where troops fired six volleys point blank from across the street into a dense crowd and only twenty or so were killed.<sup>112</sup> The general impression fixed in the public mind, however, was that, although casualty figures for individual assaults may have been low, the total number of killed and injured was much higher than official figures indicated. Estimates circulating in St. Petersburg were in line with the exaggerated accounts appearing in the foreign and underground press. Various public groups and organizations provided their own figures. A report of the Jewish Bund stated, "Until the end of January it was very difficult to determine the number of dead. Three figures are most commonly mentioned: 960, 1038, and 1216. The last figure is considered the most reliable."<sup>113</sup>

The Russian press, while self-righteously accusing the foreign papers of gross exaggeration, was under tight government censorship and could print nothing but official communiqués on the events in St. Petersburg. The statement issued by the government on Monday, January 10, was so slanted and so unbelievable that even such arch-conservative publicists as Lev Tikhomirov called it "idiotic."<sup>114</sup> At first the government had announced only 56

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. Also see *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 65, p. 250.

<sup>112</sup> Goncharov, p. 165.

<sup>113</sup> Bund report, p. 9. These figures were said to have been compiled by the "Organizational Committee of the Technological Institute" and received wide acceptance. See, for example, *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 66, p. 272.

<sup>114</sup> Tikhomirov, "25 let nazad. (Iz dnevnika L. Tikhomirova)," *KA*, no. 1 (38), 1930, p. 57.

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dead, but the official statement of January 10 gave the totals as 76 dead and 233 wounded. By the following day the numbers were raised to 96 dead and 333 wounded, but even those defending the government agreed the figures were still too low and referred to casualties in the thousands.<sup>115</sup> The suspicion that the government falsified the statistics deliberately to prevent the public from discovering the truth only contributed to the general confusion. To make matters worse, in order to avoid possible demonstrations the authorities barbarously decided to bury the victims secretly without notifying their families. The bodies were removed during the nights of January 11 and 12 and taken by train under heavy police and military guard to be buried hastily in common graves in the more distant suburban cemeteries.<sup>116</sup>

The government casualty figures were compiled from lists provided by the hospital and had to be revised upward repeatedly as additional numbers of wounded died in the days following. By mid-January, at the request of Nicholas II, the new minister of the interior submitted a "completely verified and revised" list containing 130 names, including the police officer killed at the Narva Arch.<sup>117</sup> On January 22, 1905, the official organ of the office of the city government published a list of 130 Bloody Sunday fatalities. The next day the official government newspaper reprinted this list, and other papers were allowed to publish it.<sup>118</sup> The official list did not deliberately falsify the number of casualties, but

<sup>115</sup> For the official statement, see *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, January 10, 1905. The usual figure cited was five thousand killed; see Tikhomirov, p. 57, and *Dnevnik Bogdanovich*, p. 331.

<sup>116</sup> Argun, p. 21. Extensive precautions were taken in the removal and burial of Bloody Sunday casualties. See the military report of the operation cited in *Akademii nauk SSSR, Ocherki istorii Leningrada*, vol. III, p. 268; and the report of the director of police in *KL*, no. 1, 1922, p. 337.

<sup>117</sup> See facsimile of the covering page with notations by Nicholas II and the minister of the interior in *Okun'*, p. 77, and notes on pp. 75-76.

<sup>118</sup> *Novoe vremia*, January 22, 1905, p. 13 and *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, 23 January, 1905. The list gave the names of 119 of the dead; the remaining eleven were not identified.



it was incomplete. Official figures included only the dead and wounded who were taken to the hospitals, not those who were cared for at home. It also omitted those who eventually died later from wounds.<sup>119</sup> The exact number of such cases is impossible to determine, but Soviet historian Nevskii concluded the number of fatalities on Bloody Sunday and the succeeding days to be between 150 and 200, with an additional 450 to 800 wounded, "so that the total number of casualties is calculated to be between 800 and 1,000 maximum."<sup>120</sup>

The figures computed by Nevskii seem rather high, but they are conservative compared to most Soviet estimates. Despite the publication of official lists with the names of the casualties, Soviet accounts of Bloody Sunday continue to repeat statistics of 1,000 dead or 5,000 casualties.<sup>121</sup> Distrust for the accuracy of official statements and the frequent repetition of similar figures in the foreign press have contributed to this error, but the most frequently quoted Soviet source is a comment by Lenin. Citing a story in *The Times* (London), originally printed in the French press, which described the presentation of a list of 4,600 casualties to the minister of the interior at a special press reception on January 13, Lenin commented that the figure seemed too low to him.<sup>122</sup> Since the event has not been substantiated by other sources, the presentation probably never took place,

<sup>119</sup> Many demonstrators were injured by the shoving of the crowd, were trampled by the horses and the crowds, or were cut and bruised by whips and sabres, etc. Only the seriously wounded requiring hospital treatment were registered and thus included in the figures issued by the government.

<sup>120</sup> Nevskii, *Razboichee dvizhenie v ianvarskie dni*, pp. 123-125, discusses the inflated figures in detail, concluding that, "It must be admitted that even the Leftist parties sinned in this" (p. 123).

<sup>121</sup> For example, the *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, under "Deviatoe ianvaria 1905," vol. 5, p. 37, gives the figures of "over one thousand killed and several thousand wounded."

<sup>122</sup> Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 9, p. 227. Speaking at a meeting commemorating Bloody Sunday in 1917 in Zurich, Lenin said that "according to police information over one thousand were killed and over two thousand were wounded" ("Doklad o revoliutsii 1905 goda," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 29, p. 306).

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but it is the basis for numerous Soviet accounts estimating the casualties in the thousands.<sup>123</sup>

The opposition intelligentsia were hard pressed to orient themselves in the confused and chaotic revolutionary environment of Bloody Sunday and the days immediately following. Almost everyone was on the streets on Sunday, and numerous casualties were from non-working class spectators and bystanders, but on the whole the participation of the intelligentsia was only marginal. Most of its members felt like strangers among the workers, and only a few were directly involved. On Sunday the intelligentsia of St. Petersburg busily moved about, gathering in various places to share bits of news and impressions, convinced that the revolution had begun, but with no idea of what was to be done. During the day there was a meeting at the public library where Maxim Gorky made a speech, and that evening a larger meeting took place at the Free Economic Society.<sup>124</sup> The meeting at the Free Economic Society was crowded. One speaker called for showing support of the workers by donations of money and arms and ended his speech with the cry "Long live the Revolution!"<sup>125</sup> The construction of barricades on Basil Island was described in somewhat exaggerated form, and Gimer was introduced as the leader of the barricade defenders.<sup>126</sup> Each speaker was greeted by thunderous applause and enthusiastic shouts of approval.

<sup>123</sup> It is highly improbable that the minister of the interior, about to be relieved of his duties, would have been holding receptions for the press. Besides, since the establishment of the office of the governor general, all inquiries about the events in St. Petersburg would have been referred to him and not to the minister of the interior.

<sup>124</sup> *Poslednie izvestiia*, 17/30 January, 1905, p. 2\*. Also *akademiia nauk SSSR, Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva A. M. Gor'kogo*, vol. 1, p. 504.

<sup>125</sup> See what is purported to be the minutes of the meeting, in Simbirskii (Nasakin), *Pravda o Gapone i "9-om ianvare,"* pp. 91-95, where the attendance is given as seven hundred. Correspondence to *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 65, p. 247, gives the attendance as "over four hundred." Lebedev in *Pravda*, January 21, 1923, wrote that the meeting attracted only about fifty people and was not very lively ("*sobranie shlo vialo*").

<sup>126</sup> Gimer, p. 11.

Finally Maxim Gorky rose to address the meeting and informed the crowd that, contrary to rumors, Gapon was unharmed. He then read a letter from the priest:

Dear comrades-workers:

And so there is no tsar! Between him and the people lies the blood of our comrades. Long live then the beginning of the popular struggle for freedom! I bless you all. This very day I will be with you. I am busy at the moment.

Father Gapon<sup>127</sup>

Having read the letter, Gorky introduced a worker identified as Gapon's representative who, despite his pale, suffering face and hoarse, trembling voice, spoke with passion. His eyes burned as he announced that the workers no longer had a tsar and appealed to the intelligentsia for money and arms to aid the struggle for freedom. He accused the intelligentsia of empty talk and called for a definite commitment, "In the name of the workers' party, I demand an immediate and unequivocal answer."<sup>128</sup> Pandemonium broke out in the hall as the speaker was quickly ushered off the stage. Everyone wanted to know the identity of this bold orator who asserted the workers' claim to leadership and the emergence of a "workers' party" among those who considered the revolutionary opposition their own natural preserve. The identity of the speaker was soon revealed—it was Father Gapon, with no beard and in civilian clothes. He had been brought from Gorky's house to the meeting, where he made his claim to leadership of the revolution in the name of the working class.

Gapon presented himself as the avenger of the Bloody Sunday massacre. He called for an outright and immediate

<sup>127</sup> Text in a letter from Gorky to Peshkova in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 28, p. 348; and *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 65, p. 253.

<sup>128</sup> Simbirskii, p. 93.

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overthrow of the regime in the most violent terms. He not only accepted policies advocated by the revolutionaries, whom he had heretofore held at arm's length, but he also aspired to go them one better. His instinctive and extreme reaction, not unlike his behavior in the seminary and his withdrawal from the Theological Academy, was buttressed by public opinion and Marxist theory. Since the Marxists accepted the primacy of the working classes in the revolutionary struggle, Gapon, as the workers' delegated representative, should logically stand at the head of the revolutionary movement.

Overnight the Russian revolutionary priest became an international celebrity. Other opponents of the regime were eager to capitalize on his instant success. Rutenberg, who helped hide Gapon, took it upon himself to influence him "in the proper direction." Gapon readily agreed to write several proclamations and appeals. One was addressed to the soldiers, proclaiming a "pastoral damnation" on those who fired on the workers and releasing those who would "help the people attain their freedom" from the oath of allegiance to the tsar. Another, addressed to the workers, began:

Dear comrades-workers! The innocent blood of people has been shed. Let us store the feeling of anger and revenge toward the beast-tsar and his jackal-ministers. But have faith that the day will dawn when a host of workers more dreadful and more conscious will rise as one for freedom, for freedom for all Russia. Then do not weep for the dead heroes; console yourselves—we are beaten, but we are not conquered. Let us rather tear up all portraits of the bloodsucking tsar and say to him: be thou damned with all thine august reptilian progeny!<sup>129</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Text of both appeals in *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 65, p. 244. See also Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 107 and 181.

According to Rutenberg, he rewrote another appeal which Gapon signed. After some additional editing, the appeal was reprinted in great numbers and became famous under its opening address: "Dear brothers, united in blood, comrades-workers!" (*Rodnye, krov'iu spaiannye brat'ia, tovarishchi-rabochie!*) Gapon authorized Rutenberg to place his signature under future appeals.<sup>130</sup>

Sunday evening, with darkness settling over the capital, the workers retreated to their quarters to collect their thoughts. They did not know what to do and had no plans. Like their leader, their thoughts focused on vengeance against the perpetrators of the massacre. The day of resurrection had turned into a day of destruction, and for most Gapon's words were realized—they no longer had a tsar. This was the most significant consequence of Bloody Sunday. The people, who only a short time ago were willing to rest all their hopes on the goodwill of their sovereign, were now willing to take up arms against him. What generations of revolutionaries had not been able to achieve in years of propaganda and agitation was brought home to the working masses in a few hours by the bullets of His Majesty's élite troops. The working class of St. Petersburg was revolutionized overnight, and the battle line between the workers and the autocracy had been drawn.

<sup>130</sup> Rutenberg, pp. 36-38.

## CHAPTER X

### Conclusion: *St. Petersburg Workers after Bloody Sunday*

Восемь залпов с Невы

И девятый,

Усталый, как слава.

Это—

(Слева и справа

Несутся уже на рысях.)

Это—

(Дали орут:

Мн сочтемся еще за расправу.)

Это рвутся

Суставы

Династии данных

Присяг.

Борис Пастернак

"Девятьсот пятый год"

Eight volleys from the Neva

And the ninth,

Tired, like glory.

This is—

(From left and right

Already running at a trot)

This is—

(In the distance they cry:

We will yet avenge the massacre)

This is the tearing apart

Of the joints

Of oaths

To the dynasty sworn.

Boris Pasternak "1905"

**B**loody Sunday ended the Gaponovite movement. The very foundation on which the Assembly had been built, the faith that workers could better their lives through cooperation with the tsarist regime, had been destroyed. The march to the Winter Palace was the consummation of the workers' early strivings. When the regime failed this test of faith, the Assembly lost its viability as a legal labor organization. The slogan, "We have no tsar," first uttered by Gapon and later echoed by his followers, was the last, desperate cry of the Assembly movement.

Although Gapon still commanded an almost religiously fanatical following and had vowed to lead the revolutionary forces in revenge, after Bloody Sunday he essentially lost his leading role in the St. Petersburg labor movement. He was hidden, first in St. Petersburg and later on a remote estate, until he finally escaped across the border.<sup>1</sup> The rest

<sup>1</sup> For the description of his escape, see Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, pp. 114-124.

of his story is a postscript to Bloody Sunday—an interesting personal epilogue with little relevance to the developments in St. Petersburg. Gapon first tried to unite all the revolutionary factions abroad under his leadership. Later he became involved in an unsuccessful attempt to smuggle arms into Russia. In the end he returned to Russia, hoping to re-establish the Assembly. His willingness to cooperate with Witte under the constitutional arrangements granted by the October Manifesto antagonized the revolutionary parties without regaining the trust of the police authorities, who would not permit him to resume a leading role in the labor movement. An intricate plot masterminded by the head of the Special Section of the police department compromised Gapon and resulted in his death at the hands of the man who had rescued him on Bloody Sunday—Petr Rutenberg.

At the critical moment, just after the massacre, Gapon had left his followers in confusion, calling on them to join the revolutionary movement he had previously taught them to reject. With Gapon gone and most of his assistants under arrest, the workers felt abandoned. Shock and disbelief were their immediate reactions to Bloody Sunday, followed by anger, frustration, and an all-consuming desire for revenge. Witnesses left vivid descriptions of these attitudes. Just moments after the shooting at Troitskaia Square an elderly man, his voice filled with anger, spoke to a youngster of about fourteen, "Remember, son, remember and swear to repay the tsar. You saw how much blood he spilled, you saw? Then swear, son, swear!"<sup>2</sup> The bolshevik M. Liadov, who witnessed the shootings on Palace Square, was particularly struck by the immediate change that came over the crowd:

I observed the faces around me, and I detected neither fear nor panic. No, the reverent and almost prayerful expressions were replaced by hostility and even hatred. I saw these looks of hatred and vengeance on literally every face—old and young, men and women. The

<sup>2</sup> Protchenko, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, ed., *Pervaiia russkaia revoliutsiia*, p. 25.

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revolution was truly born, and it was born in the very core, in the very bowels of the working masses.<sup>3</sup>

The most significant effect of Bloody Sunday was this dramatic change in the attitude of the heretofore loyal lower classes. The wanton firing on unarmed workers had an overwhelming psychological impact. Until 1905 the bulk of the Russian masses had remained steadfastly devoted to their sovereign, but after Bloody Sunday even the most religious monarchists among the workers tore portraits of the tsars from the walls of their homes. Some removed the icons also. The tsar was no longer distinguished from the hated bureaucrats surrounding him; he was held personally responsible for the tragedy in front of his palace. Lenin's sister recalled a marked change in mood among the most conservative and politically backward elements in the capital. Cab drivers, who were usually hostile to and uncommunicative with the intelligentsia, openly discussed the events. She recalled a typical peasant driver recounting to her the shooting at Narva Arch. He was particularly indignant at the firing upon a religious procession carrying icons and portraits of the tsar. Feigning innocence, she led him on: "Hey, it would seem the tsar's portrait might also get hit?" "Yes, and he got it right in the nose," was the terse reply. From this surprising response she concluded, "I was witnessing the extinction of the faith in the tsar among those most loyal to him, the lowest strata of the masses."<sup>4</sup>

All of Russian society was repulsed by the brutal suppression of the peaceful demonstration. The strikes in St. Petersburg continued and spread to other cities. In the words of the Kolpino workers, "After these bloody events, no one can return to work."<sup>5</sup> Assemblies of nobility, zemstvos, city dumas, faculties of universities, and other public bodies issued strongly worded statements deploring

<sup>3</sup> Liadov, *Iz zhizni partii v 1903-1907 godakh. (Vospominaniia)*, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Elizarova-Ulianova "Iz proshlogo," p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> From reminiscences of a worker in *Petrogradskaia pravda*, January 22, 1920.



the government actions. University students voted to go on strike; theater performances were cancelled; and the Merchants' Club of St. Petersburg refused to admit officers of the Guard.<sup>6</sup> The regime was indeed in trouble when even students of theological academies voted overwhelmingly to go on strike.<sup>7</sup> Students of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy unanimously condemned the government action, offered a prayer for the victims of the massacre, and called for a "modern regime" with national representation.<sup>8</sup> The general reaction of the Russian public was perhaps best expressed in the anguished invocation of Bishop Sergii of St. Petersburg:

Let that day be darkness! . . . That night—let thick darkness seize it! Let it not rejoice among the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.  
(Job 3:4, 6)

Oh, if only that day was not in our history!

The editorial in the official newspaper of the Church added: "There can be no two opinions about the ninth of January. That day is recognized by all as grievous and lamentable. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

The wave of protests reverberated throughout the world, and mass demonstrations took place in major cities around the globe. Nowhere were the demonstrations more outspoken than in France, Russia's principal ally. Jean Jaurès and Georges Clemenceau thundered their denunciations from the floor of the National Assembly. Anatole France

<sup>6</sup> For a brief description of the reaction of the country to Bloody Sunday, see Harcave, *The First Blood*, pp. 99ff.

<sup>7</sup> Students of the St. Petersburg, Kiev, and Kazan theological academies went on strike. See Cherevanin, "Dvizhenie intelligentsii," pp. 146-202, for a general discussion of the reaction of the intelligentsia to Bloody Sunday. See also Erman, *Intelligenstiiia v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii*, pp. 44-74.

<sup>8</sup> *Poslednie izvestiia*, no. 216 (February 24/11, 1905), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Tserkovnyi vestnik*, January 20, 1905.

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and many others spoke before mass meetings.<sup>10</sup> Even the conservative *Times* of London editorialized:

There is but one sentiment excited throughout the civilized world by the events in St. Petersburg—a sentiment of horror at the brutal butchery of unarmed people whose only offense—at least in the case of the vast majority—was a display of their pathetic faith in the goodness of the Tsar.<sup>11</sup>

For the government officials who were to varying degrees responsible for the tragedy, the most lamentable fact was the ease with which the confrontation could have been avoided. The general consensus was that a close relative of the tsar, or a high official in full uniform, could have accepted the petition on behalf of the tsar and thereby pacified the workers. As it was, Nicholas II had missed an excellent opportunity to reaffirm the faith of the masses. Grand Duke Paul, an uncle of the tsar, was in the company of Maurice Paléologue, future French ambassador to Russia, when he received news of the shootings. The grand duke exploded: "Why in heaven didn't the emperor receive the strikers' deputation? There was nothing seditious about their attitude. . . . What has happened is both unpardonable and irreparable . . . we would have been saved!"<sup>12</sup> An English lord, seeing Russia in the throes of the revolution of 1905, commented that the tsar had "forfeited the confidence of his people and lost an opportunity offered him

<sup>10</sup> There is a convenient, brief summary of reaction in France in Alzona, *Some French Contemporary Opinions of the Russian Revolution of 1905*. For the Soviet view on reaction in Europe, see Mnukhina, "Otkliki v stranakh Zapadnoi Evropy na sobytia 9 ianvaria 1905 g. v Peterburge," pp. 77-89. See also 1905, part III: "Otkliki za granitse na rasstrel rabochei demonstratsii 9 ianvaria v Peterburge."

<sup>11</sup> *The Times* (London), January 24, 1905, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Maurice Paléologue, *The Turning Point: Three Critical Years, 1904-1906*, p. 180. For additional comments, see Liubimov, *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8, p. 129. Similar views expressed by Witte in his memoirs (II, p. 341).

which, if seized, would have made him the most popular sovereign in the world."<sup>13</sup>

Despite their private acknowledgments that Bloody Sunday had been a grievous and avoidable error, the public expressions of regret which many officials hastened to deliver defended the use of troops and tried to gloss over the effects of the massacre. Sviatopolk-Mirskii insisted that he could not have permitted the huge gathering without risking an outbreak of large-scale disorders. In an interview, Grand Duke Vladimir lamented the shooting and stated that he had personally attempted to prevent it. Yet he justified the use of troops to prevent a march on the Winter Palace, which he likened to the march on Versailles in 1789. Behind the demonstration, he said, was an "anarchistic and socialist plot." Carefully understating the import of the workers' claims, the grand duke assured his interviewers that reforms were forthcoming.<sup>14</sup> As one defender of the regime asserted, the assumption underlying the government's response was that "to allow the manifestation was to capitulate without a struggle."<sup>15</sup> Only after the blood had been shed did the tsarist officials question this assumption.

Tsar Nicholas II, on whose shoulders the final responsibility rested, seemed curiously aloof from the disastrous events in the capital. He passed the day quietly with his family in the pleasant surroundings of Tsarskoe Selo. The brief entry in his diary spoke of Bloody Sunday as though it had been a tragic natural calamity. Though he expressed grief over the day's events, he seemed unaware of their fatal implication and quickly passed on to more mundane affairs:

*January 9, Sunday: A grievous day! Serious disorders occurred in St. Petersburg because workers sought to*

<sup>13</sup> Lord Valentia, M. P. from Oxford, in *The Times* (London), January 27, 1905.

<sup>14</sup> Associated Press dispatch appearing in many papers; see *The Times* (London), February 2, 1905.

<sup>15</sup> Ol'denburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II*, vol. II, book 2, p. 267.

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reach the Winter Palace. Troops were compelled to fire in several parts of the city; many were killed and wounded. God, how painful and heartbreaking! Mama came from the city straight to church. Had lunch with everyone. Went for a walk with Misha. Mama stayed overnight.<sup>16</sup>

The immediate response of the regime's defenders was to blame revolutionaries and hostile foreign governments for instigating the demonstration. Reactionary vigilante groups, abetted by the police, attacked members of the intelligentsia on the streets of St. Petersburg, and a number of students were badly beaten. Various governmental agencies spread rumors that the disorders were instigated by foreign agents, and a government-supported public relations firm based in Europe and directed by General Cherep-Spiridovich, former president of the Moscow Slavonic Society, sent a series of telegrams to this effect. An unsigned telegram to the ministry of the interior stated that Gapon was a paid enemy agent supplied with "pounds of sterling."<sup>17</sup> The General Staff received a telegram stating that enormous sums of Japanese and English money were spent to foment disorders in Russia. The message concluded, "Explain the truth to the Russian people. Any sympathy with the disorders is crime and treason." Harried officials, only too glad to find excuses for their actions, gave these telegrams wide circulation. The acting prefect of Moscow had them printed and posted throughout the city, and progovernment newspapers gave the allegations prominent coverage.

The idea of a revolutionary plot subsidized by the Japanese and English took firm roots among reactionary segments of the population. Pobedonostsev prevailed on the governing body of the church to issue a pastoral letter repeating the allegation that foreign money was responsible

<sup>16</sup> *Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolaia II*, p. 194.

<sup>17</sup> The text of the telegram is given in Sverchkov, "G. Gapon," *Krasnaia nov'*, no. 5, 1925, p. 160. See also the review of the press in *Novoe vremia*, January 15, 1905.

for the unrest in Russia. The letter, which was to be read in all churches on Sunday, called on the Russian populace to obey the authorities: "'Fear God, Honor the Tsar' (I Peter, 2:17). 'For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained by God' (Romans, 13:1)." The pastoral letter also branded Gapon an "unworthy cleric who has insolently violated his sacred vows."<sup>18</sup>

Few were convinced by the contrived explanations of the government, and most officials realized that some action was necessary to mollify the enraged workers. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, whose influence was clearly on the wane, suggested that the tsar deliver a direct address to the workers immediately after January 9, but the suggestion was ignored.<sup>19</sup> Witte, Kokovtsov, and Aleksei S. Ermolov, the minister of agriculture and state domains, pressed the emperor for some action. Kokovtsov was particularly worried because the situation in Russia was having an adverse effect on negotiations for two large international loans.<sup>20</sup> He even issued a proclamation promising the workers that the government would consider measures to improve their welfare as soon as they returned to work. This was followed by a joint declaration from the minister of finance and General Trepov, the newly appointed governor general of St. Petersburg.<sup>21</sup> Ermolov's memorandum to the emperor boldly

<sup>18</sup> The text of the Synodical message is to be found in Avidonov, "9 ianvaria i sinod," pp. 52-54. This version received considerable circulation in antirevolutionary literature. For example, a description of preparations for the demonstration that is typical of the conservative point of view is found in Prince Mikhail Shakhovskoi, *Gapon i gaponovshchina*, p. 23: "Cabs arrived at the quarters of 'conscious' workers . . . quickly unloaded some large boxes, and, having received payments, quickly disappeared."

<sup>19</sup> Sviatopolk Mirskaia, "Dnevnik," p. 278.

<sup>20</sup> Kokovtsov, *Out of My Past*, p. 22. Also see his memoranda in B. Romanov, "9-oie ianvariia 1905 g.," *KA*, no. 4-5 (11-12), 1925, pp. 4-6 and 7-10.

<sup>21</sup> Kokovtsov was very careful to coordinate his proposals and actions with Trepov. On January 13 the minister of finance issued his appeal (1905, document 77, pp. 149-150). On January 15 it was further elaborated as a joint statement with General Trepov. See *Novoe vremia* and *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* for January 20, 1905.

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called for the convocation of a national representative body.<sup>22</sup> At last Nicholas II agreed to issue a manifesto promising that the workers' grievances would be given a fair hearing. Before the manifesto could be completed, however, the tsar changed his mind and decided instead to receive a delegation of workers in person.<sup>23</sup>

The idea of a workers' delegation apparently originated with Trepov who, as the former prefect of Moscow, was familiar with the labor policies of Zubatov. Trepov recommended that one deputy be elected for every thousand workers. The deputies would be reliable, loyal workers who had not taken part in the recent disturbances. As a last precaution, the employers and the police would exercise veto power over the final selection of delegates and weed out any troublemakers. The tsar approved of the plan, but the workers treated the elections as a complete farce, insisting that they already had their deputies and that the Assembly branches were their legitimate organs of representation. Radical propaganda had a field day with the proposed elections. Kokovtsov warned Nicholas II of the workers' reaction, but with his characteristic stiffness the tsar replied, "If this is so, no one can blame me for being indifferent to the needs of the workers; they are to blame for having refused to come to me with confidence."<sup>24</sup>

When the attempt to organize elections failed, the police authorities designated a delegation of reliable workers selected by the managements of various enterprises. On January 19, the selected workers were approached by gendarmes officers, told to dress in their best clothes, and taken to the Winter Palace, where they were individually inspected by Trepov himself. The delegates were undressed, thoroughly searched, and then instructed on how to behave in the presence of the tsar. They were strictly warned to

<sup>22</sup> See "Zapiski Ermolova," *KA*, no. 1 (8), 1925, pp. 49-69.

<sup>23</sup> Discussions of the manifesto touched on the problem of labor and the responsibility for Bloody Sunday. See the account of the ministerial conference with the heads of the departments of the state council in Vanag, ed., "Proekt manifesta o sobytiakh 9 ianvaria," pp. 26-38.

<sup>24</sup> Kokovtsov, p. 39.

speak only when spoken to and not say anything they might later regret. On the train to Tsarskoe Selo, two deputies accompanied by a police agent were assigned to each compartment, and the workers were not allowed to speak to each other along the way.<sup>25</sup> After a second search, the thirty-four reluctant and rather intimidated representatives of the workers were ushered into a hall under the watchful eyes of the police and lined up against the wall. The emperor entered and read a short note prepared for him by Trepov.

Nicholas spoke like a father addressing his errant children. He expressed sadness over the deaths of innocent people. Wicked people, he told them, had incited the workers to sedition. The workers' lives were hard and improvements were sorely needed, he continued, but to address the tsar as a rebellious mob was a crime. Strikes and large gatherings always led to disorders and compelled the authorities to use force. "I believe in the honest feelings of the working people and in their unshakable loyalty to me," Nicholas intoned, "and therefore I forgive them their guilt." He concluded his speech by promising to improve the lives of the workers and donated fifty thousand rubles to help the families of Bloody Sunday victims. Nicholas then passed by the delegates, speaking briefly with each one. In parting he told them to go back to work with "God's blessings" and relate his words to their comrades.<sup>26</sup>

The tsar and his entourage were pleased with the recep-

<sup>25</sup> Most of the deputies feared the reaction of their fellow workers, and many were anxious to prove that they were selected against their will. A large number of them wrote letters to various papers, explaining the circumstances of their participation. For example, see eight letters sent to Stroeve, "O rabochei deputatsii k tsariu posle 9/22 ianvaria 1905 goda," pp. 38-46; see also 1905, note 44, pp. 816-817, and *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 66 (1905), p. 264.

<sup>26</sup> The draft of the speech is given in "Trepovskii proekt rechi Nikolaia II k rabochim posle 9 ianvaria 1905 g.," *KA*, no. 1 (20), 1927, pp. 241-242; a more polished, final version in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, January 20, 1905; *Rus'*, January 20, 1905, contains a list of names of the delegates. See also *The Times* (London), February 2, 1905, for a description of the reception.

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tion, but the workers were infuriated, particularly by the insinuation that the tsar was forgiving them for their crime. The Bolsheviks of St. Petersburg distributed an extremely successful, devastating leaflet entitled "Vile Comedy in the Palace."<sup>27</sup> Petr Struve, editor of the liberal newspaper *Osvobozhdenie*, wrote an impassionate, scathing editorial entitled "He Forgives Them":

It is difficult to write about this speech. Indignation, which has no bounds, and should have none, is choking us . . . The tsar's speech is simply unbearable. It is a provocation. It is a bomb, prepared by the tsar himself, that might explode at any moment and smash the throne to smithereens.<sup>28</sup>

The beneficiaries of these events were the revolutionaries, who could take advantage of the disillusioned and bitter attitude of the workers and penetrate the working masses as never before. At first the workers were still leery of the intellectuals, and some even blamed the revolutionaries for the shootings on Bloody Sunday. When Somov and his Menshevik group attempted to organize a meeting of one of the Gaponovite branches, his first remarks were greeted with shouts, "You are dragging us to disaster! You should be hanged!"<sup>29</sup> But the revolutionaries had convincing arguments. They had opposed the regime long before the workers organized their protest and, most significantly, had opposed the march to the palace and predicted its tragic result. As some government officials had feared, the distraught workers of St. Petersburg turned to the revolutionaries for leadership. The era of humble supplications was over. During 1905 the revolutionary parties gradually won over a large following among the workers, and many Gaponovites joined their ranks. A large contingent of

<sup>27</sup> 1905, document 95, pp. 174-175.

<sup>28</sup> *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 65 (1905), p. 242.

<sup>29</sup> Somov, "Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticheskogo dvizheniia," p. 43.



Gapon's former assistants were in the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905, and some were even elected to the Second Duma.

The emperor had promised to give the workers' complaints quick consideration, and, prodded by the continuing unrest, he attempted to keep his promise. A committee under the chairmanship of Kokovtsov began deliberations, but with no results.<sup>30</sup> On January 28, Nicholas II instructed Witte to establish an interdepartmental commission, including representatives of business and labor, to consider the workers' grievances. The commission was to be chaired by a member of the state council, Senator N. V. Shidlovskii.<sup>31</sup> Both Witte and Kokovtsov fretted about the appointment of Shidlovskii, who had probably been selected at Trepov's suggestion. Three days later workers were once more instructed to elect representatives.

The announcement of the elections to the Shidlovskii Commission aroused lively interest among the workers. Allowing labor representatives to participate in the work of a state commission was a dramatic departure from past practices. Eventually a somewhat complicated set of rules for electing labor representatives was clarified. The workers were divided into nine categories according to their professions. Representatives were to be chosen indirectly by a group of electors. Each factory employing between one and five workers could select one elector, and one additional elector could be added for each five hundred additional workers. The electors would then choose about fifty representatives to participate in the commission. The immediate response of the workers was to demand that the Assembly branches be reopened and allowed to function independently. This demand was clearly formulated in a petition sent to the commission by workers of the Chesher

<sup>30</sup> This committee accomplished very little. It is not even mentioned by Kokovtsov in his memoirs. A convenient compilation of material on its work is provided in Romanov, ed., *Rabochii vopros v komissii V. N. Kokovtsova v 1905 g.*

<sup>31</sup> Letter, dated January 28, from Nicholas II to Witte, in Witte papers, Columbia University Russian Archive.

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Mills, and similar petitions were sent by other groups. The millworkers' petition concluded, "Any other method of electing workers' representatives will compel us to refuse to participate in the commission."<sup>32</sup>

The demand that the Assembly branches be reopened became a precondition for selecting representatives to the commission. The electors chosen by the workers were predominantly Gaponovites although many were elected with the help of Social Democrats. The Social Democrats, particularly the Mensheviks, organized an extensive propaganda campaign around the elections.<sup>33</sup> They issued numerous leaflets and sent speakers to workers' meetings. Nevertheless, the electors presented the commission with a set of demands similar to those elaborated in the Cheshher petition, including, as the first and principal demand, the immediate reopening of the eleven Assembly branches. The electors also demanded complete freedom of discussion and personal immunity. As evidence of goodwill, they demanded the release of all their comrades arrested after January 9, attaching a list of those arrested. The electors' statement concluded that if Shidlovskii did not accede to their demands, they would refuse to participate in the commission.<sup>34</sup> In reply, Shidlovskii could promise only that the workers' representatives would not be prosecuted for what they said while working on the commission. Dissatisfied with this response, the electors refused to select representatives. Shidlovskii recommended that the work of the commission be terminated. Accordingly, on February 20, the emperor ordered the commission disbanded, and the gulf separating the workers and the rulers of Russia continued to widen.

The Shidlovskii electoral campaign was an important landmark in the development of the St. Petersburg labor

<sup>32</sup> Text in *Nashi dni*, February 2, 1905.

<sup>33</sup> A convenient discussion of the role of Social Democrats in the electoral campaign is to be found in Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, pp. 75-128.

<sup>34</sup> *Russkie vedomosti* (Moscow), February 17, 1905.

movement. It enabled opposition elements to fill the vacuum left by the suppression of the Assembly, and much of the distrust between the workers and the intelligentsia was broken down. Although the old ideas of the Assembly dominated the slogans put forth in the campaign, a new organizational framework was emerging, that of representatives elected on the factory level. Although the Shidlovskii Commission ended its brief career, the electors were recognized as new leaders of the workers and continued to function as workers' representatives in the months to follow. Ultimately, the new organizational framework of factory representatives led to the formation, in October 1905, of the now famous Soviet or Council of Workers' Representatives of St. Petersburg.<sup>35</sup>

Bloody Sunday proved to be the first day of the revolution of 1905—the tumultuous year that culminated in the October general strike and the December insurrection in Moscow. The strikes in St. Petersburg did not quiet down. Some plants returned to work, only to go on strike again. As news of the massacre spread, disorders began in other cities. The workers of Moscow went on strike on January 10; on the eleventh the strikes spread to Warsaw, Kharkov, Vilna, Kovno, and Helsinfors; on the twelfth to Kiev, Riga, and the towns of the central industrial region; by the seventeenth they reached Batumi and, on the eighteenth, Tiflis. Over half a million workers were on strike in January, and strikes continued intermittently throughout the year. In a number of instances troops were brought out, and, as in Riga and Warsaw, many strikers were killed and wounded. By the end of 1905, the ancient capital of Moscow was in the throes of an armed uprising. By October the embattled regime was forced to relent and grant some reforms.

Bloody Sunday and the violent year that followed threw the tsarist government into turmoil. It was difficult for the officials to see the logical connections between the government's policies, the workers' reactions, and the outburst of

<sup>35</sup> See the discussion of this point in Schwarz, pp. 127-128.

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condemnation from abroad. One high official wrote, "A foul deed of immense proportions had taken place. No one expected it, and no one desired it. No one understood why it happened."<sup>36</sup> The officials blamed the shooting of the demonstrators on a revolutionary conspiracy and the threat of massive disorders. Their claims that behind the peaceful demonstration stood a revolutionary plot had no foundation. The reports of the Okhrana before January 9 pointed with some gratification to cases of workers manhandling revolutionary agitators. By the evening of the eighth, it was clear that the revolutionaries were losing ground, and the Okhrana reports seemed to gloat over their discomfort. The police could easily have arrested revolutionary speakers who appeared at various meetings, but this was not thought necessary. In fact, the workers themselves refused to tolerate any revolutionary manifestations during the march and warned the revolutionaries not to spoil the procession.

The threat of disorders was equally chimerical. As the police knew, the leadership of the Assembly had good control over the crowds and was cooperative in preventing any outbreak of violence. The vast majority of the workers were completely unarmed; those who carried weapons were exceptions. Even the revolutionaries had been instructed by their organizations not to bear arms. Hospital records testify to the utter defenselessness of the demonstrators. According to hospital rules, all casualties of Bloody Sunday were thoroughly searched and their personal effects recorded. Among all the dead and wounded, who included revolutionaries and some of the most militant Gaponovites marching in the front ranks, not a single weapon was found, "not even a rock."<sup>37</sup> Despite the fears and alarms raised by the officials, there was absolutely no sign of disorder on the morning of January 9.

The real causes of the Bloody Sunday massacre lay deep within the tsarist state—the fears and suspicions of the gov-

<sup>36</sup> Liubimov, "Gapon i 9 ianvaria," no. 9, p. 115.

<sup>37</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 111.

ernment were only their surface reflection. In essence, the regime had failed to recognize or understand the extent of the workers' dissatisfaction. As a result, the authorities failed to provide legitimate institutional means for rectifying the workers' grievances peacefully. When certain government officials finally began to encourage workers' organizations within limits, they acted under the illusion that labor organizations could be permitted to function and at the same time prevented from pursuing their logical purpose—the defense of the workers' interests. Determined to keep the workers away from revolutionary influences, the authorities in the ministry of the interior encouraged Zubatov's police unions and aided Gapon's Assembly. The officials were willing to overlook the seeming militancy of the Assembly as long as Gapon succeeded in keeping the workers safe from revolutionary parties. With the Putilov dispute and the claim to act independently as the legal representative of the workers in labor negotiations, the Assembly went far beyond the expected and permissible boundaries set by its supporters in official circles.

When the Putilov dispute first broke out, some officials tried to intervene on behalf of the workers, hoping to avoid a further escalation. Smirnov's refusal to recognize the workers' right to act on their own behalf and his intransigence in the face of government pressure forced the workers into a confrontation as means of settlement. Once the strike had broken out and the Assembly began actively recruiting support in other factories, the government officials could no longer consider supporting Gapon. From the very beginning Gapon envisaged an eventual confrontation with at least some factions of the tsarist government. He strove to deal with the authorities from a position of strength, backed by a loyal, well-disciplined, mass following. The peaceful march to the Winter Palace and the public presentation of a petition to the tsar were actions calculated to force concessions from the regime. But the tsar and his ministers were unaccustomed to acting under pressure from the

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lower classes. He relied completely on his advisors, who were more impressed by the apparent numbers and determination of Gapon's supporters than they were by the humble protestations of loyalty to the regime. The prospect of a mass demonstration naturally raised spectres of chaos, violence and revolution in the troubled imaginations of the tsarist officials. Their response, based on years of experience with lower class disorders, was tough, brutal, and predictable.

Yet the very idea of presenting a petition and the petition itself were more in the tradition of the liberal campaign than that of the peasant rebellion. The document contained some rather strong expression and some comparatively extreme demands, but it left room for compromise. Everyone objected to certain sections. The ecclesiastic authorities thought the demands for separation of church and state were unacceptable; the businessmen did not like the economic demands; and the supporters of the autocracy were particularly upset by the demand for a representative body. But everyone agreed that many of the demands were justified. The chairman of the council of ministers, Witte, for example, stated that thirteen of eighteen demands in the petition could have been accepted immediately without much difficulty.<sup>38</sup>

The petition accurately reflected the workers' growing desperation. The threat to die on the square if the demands were rejected and the specification of certain demands for immediate fulfillment gave the petition a categorical tone, but it was intended as a negotiable document. The demands had varying degrees of support among the workers. If the regime had wanted to discuss specific demands seriously, Gapon would have been ready to compromise. The demand for separation of church and state, for example, would not have found much backing in the Assembly if it had not been advanced by Gapon himself. The political demands in the petition were vague and were inserted largely to satisfy

<sup>38</sup> Vanag, ed., "Proekt manifesta o sobytiakh 9 ianvaria," p. 36.

other opposition elements and broaden the Assembly's base of support.<sup>39</sup> Even Gapon's assistants objected to their inclusion. Gapon's position on the principal demand for a representative body was ambiguous, and he probably would have been satisfied with a very limited representation, including delegates from the workers, based on the model advocated by Sviatopolk-Mirskii.

The political demands engendered little support among the masses of workers, who often did not understand what national representation or political freedom involved. In the branches they were told that representatives of the people would replace the bureaucrats in helping the tsar to govern Russia. When someone proposed that the term "popular representation" be replaced by "constituent assembly," Gapon replied, "I believe in the tsar. He will come out to us, will hear us out, and will deliver us from the yoke hanging over the necks of workers."<sup>40</sup> An Associated Press reporter interviewed workers on the eve of Bloody Sunday and discovered that they wanted shorter hours, better pay, and freedoms, "but the ideas of most men on the last-named subject were rudimentary, the only concrete conception being that they wanted the conditions that existed in Germany."<sup>41</sup> Despite the inclusion of political demands, by its very nature the petition placed all hope in the autocrat, and the workers expressed their willingness to abide by his decision.

In the final analysis, Father Gapon was able to bring about the confrontation under conditions that offered him a good chance of success. He very cleverly organized the demonstrations so as to face the government with the alternatives of either coming to terms with the workers or using force against them. He brought the pressure of public opinion to bear, making sure the procession would be a public spectacle and draw the attention of the international

<sup>39</sup> The demand for a national representative body would not have been included either without Gapon's insistence.

<sup>40</sup> Chudin, in Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, p. 21.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, January 21, 1905, p. 1.

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press. The religious procession he personally led from the Narva Branch was a particularly magnificent display. Those participating in it, as well as those who met the marchers on the way, were deeply moved by the rows of workers carrying icons and portraits of the tsars. Everyone agreed that the troops would not fire on such a procession. Several doctors who worked at the hospital close to the Narva Arch described the demonstration to a fellow physician, a member of the conservative, nationalist association *Russkoe sobranie*. Hearing their description, he became convinced that everything would pass peacefully:

The picture their narratives painted left me—a person of Orthodox faith, devoted to the autocratic sovereign, who loves his native history and the ancient bond that exists between the tsar and his devoted people—with absolutely no doubt whatsoever that there would be no shooting. They would not dare.<sup>42</sup>

Despite all his efforts, though, Father Gapon shared in the responsibility for the massacres. He inspired his followers to march to their deaths even when it became clear to him that the government was determined to use force. Gapon later claimed that he deliberately led his people to the confrontation, knowing full well that the troops would open fire, in order to revolutionize the masses. But his words and actions before Bloody Sunday, his repeated insistence that the demonstration would be successful and that the authorities would only make a show of force, belie these claims. Gapon tried hard to avoid bloodshed. He repeatedly warned the city governor and the ministers of the mood among the workers and counseled that some concessions were necessary to pacify the strikers. He relayed information about the march to the palace, promising it would be peaceful and orderly. He emphasized the determination of the workers and predicted dire consequences

<sup>42</sup> "Lawyers' report," 1905, document 62, p. 110.



if the officials resorted to putting down the march by use of arms. His warnings went unheeded. The authorities were sure the workers would give way when ordered at gunpoint, if not before. Equally confident that the authorities would back away at the last moment, Gapon was willing to risk his own life and many of his trusting followers. In his own words, "The stakes were too high to grudge any sacrifice."<sup>43</sup> The moral responsibility for this decision rested on Father Gapon alone.

On Bloody Sunday, an English correspondent reported, "a cry went up from the workers: Red is Vladimir's Day! But our day is coming, and we will wear the grand ducal colors when it comes!"<sup>44</sup> The workers who marched on Bloody Sunday and their children made St. Petersburg the "cradle of the revolution." The Putilov Works became the citadel of Bolshevik strength, the proud "Red Putilovets." In October 1917, the Winter Palace was taken by storm, and the red flag flying overhead became the symbol of the workers' victory. The sons of the humble petitioners of 1905 had finally reached their destination.

<sup>43</sup> Gapon, *Istoriia moei zhizni*, p. 91 and note 41.

<sup>44</sup> *Illustrated London News*, January 28, 1905, p. 123.

## CHAPTER XI

### Epilogue: *The End of Father Gapon*

"I have just received a telegram from Axelrod . . . saying that Gapon has arrived abroad and announced himself a social democrat. It is a pity. If he had disappeared altogether there would have remained a beautiful legend, whereas as an emigré he will be a comical figure. You know," he added with a sparkle in his eye that dulled the edge of his irony, "such men are better as historical martyrs than as comrades in a party."

Victor Adler to Leon Trotsky  
From Trotsky, *My Life*

Bloody Sunday made Father Gapon a sensational figure overnight. The Orthodox priest and leader of the Russian workers' movement enjoyed greater popularity "than any Russian revolutionary had previously commanded."<sup>1</sup> After Bloody Sunday, the world anxiously waited to hear of his fate. Had Father Gapon been killed on Bloody Sunday, his name would have been enshrined in the pantheon of revolutionary leaders and would have decorated many a street in the Soviet Union. But he survived, and he tried to live up to his fame as the leader of the Russian revolution, a role that proved to be beyond his capacity.

One day in late January 1905, the doorbell rang at the Geneva apartment of Georgii Plekhanov, the venerable "Father of Russian Marxism." Plekhanov loathed being interrupted in his work and was most reluctant to receive unannounced visitors, but his annoyance changed to delight when the visitor announced himself. It was Gapon.

<sup>1</sup> Deich (Deutsch), "Geroi ne chas. (Iz vospominanii o Gapone)," p. 136. Gapon was defrocked following Bloody Sunday. He was charged with engaging in activities inappropriate for a priest. When he failed to respond to the summons, he was deprived of his ecclesiastical status. See Avidonov, "9 ianvaria 1905 i sinod," pp. 56-57.

Plekhanov lost no time in notifying his closest assistants. Soon Gapon was surrounded by a congenial company of the more prominent Russian Marxists from the editorial board of the Menshevik newspaper *Iskra*, among them Vera Zasulich, Pavel Akselrod, Fedor Dan, and Leo Deutsch. Gapon was eager to relate his accounts of the recent events in Russia and the role he played in them. Not to be outdone by the illustrious company, he presented himself as a seasoned revolutionary, ready to lead the workers in their onslaught against the hated autocracy. Anxious to please his hosts, Gapon gladly agreed that a message of his safe arrival in Geneva be sent to the prestigious newspaper of the German Social Democrats, *Vorwärts*, with a note that he fully shared the views of Social Democrats.<sup>2</sup> This was a journalistic scoop as well as a political coup for the Mensheviks, who were immensely pleased with their unexpected good fortune. Arrangements were made for Gapon to remain in Geneva, and he moved into the apartment of Pavel Akselrod.<sup>3</sup>

The company of the Menshevik theoreticians soon began wearing thin on the former Orthodox priest. Gapon was, after all, a Russian nationalist and, until recently, a confirmed monarchist. He was bubbling over with the stories of his own role in leading the workers to the confrontation with the regime, claiming that he had deliberately provoked Bloody Sunday, and desperately trying to convince his listeners of his credentials for revolutionary leadership. To the professional revolutionary intelligentsia his tales sounded like naive ramblings. With condescending smiles, they advised Gapon to study Marx in order to understand

<sup>2</sup> Deich, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Secret agents of the Okhrana's foreign service reported that Gapon arrived in Geneva around January 12 and that he was living with Akselrod. The report was dated February 3, and while it seems to have been correct on Gapon's whereabouts, it was not correct on the date of his arrival. Gapon reached Geneva at the end of January. See the dispatch of February 3, 1905, to the director of police in the Okhrana Archives, Hoover Institution, Stanford, California (hereafter cited as "Okhrana Archives"), xmb(1).

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what was happening in Russia. They explained that the course of history was determined by objective historical laws, not by individual actions. They viewed the recent events in Russia as the product of their own prolonged work among the masses. Gapon's subjective views were completely at odds with those of the Mensheviks. Although he readily admitted his complete ignorance of political theories, he could not see himself tied down with the study of theory when the imminent approach of revolution in Russia called for action. Theoretical wranglings bored him, and he generally considered theory a waste of time. It was not surprising that after a few days in the company of the Mensheviks, Gapon grew restless.

The leadership of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries was smarting from Gapon's unexpected appearance in the camp of the Social Democrats. Rutenberg seemed to have gained control over Gapon following the shooting on Bloody Sunday, and the party had made arrangements for Gapon's escape abroad, but lost him on the way. Now they found him in the company of the Social Democrats, proclaiming himself in complete sympathy with Marxism. This was a bitter blow. With the arrival of Rutenberg in Geneva, the Socialist Revolutionaries vowed "to make every effort to win him over."<sup>4</sup> It was not long before Gapon was in contact with the Socialist Revolutionaries, and Rutenberg persuaded him to leave the Mensheviks and move in with a prominent member of the party, Leonid E. Shishko. It was not long either before a double-agent of the Okhrana among the revolutionaries won the confidence of Gapon and began supplying detailed reports of his activities.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, message of February 3, 1905.

<sup>5</sup> The report of Rataev, chief of the Okhrana service abroad, to the director of police, "Kratkii obzor zagranichnoi agentury s 13 sentiabria po iul' 1905 g." in the B. I. Nikolaevskii Archive, Hoover Institution (hereafter cited as Nikolaevsky Archive), no. 32, box 1, item 3. See also the message of Rataev to the director of police, February 7, 1905, Okhrana Archives, xtc(5), folder 1. While Deutsch provided a very sensitive and perceptive account of Gapon's dealings with the Mensheviks, A. S. (pseudonym of Semen A. Rappoport) did the same for the relations of Gapon with the Socialist Revolutionaries in Geneva.

Gapon's understanding of the revolutionary underground was very rudimentary. He did not comprehend the theoretical differences and the intense rivalries among the various parties. Nor did he understand why the Socialist Revolutionaries insisted that he had compromised himself as a revolutionary leader by proclaiming himself a Social Democrat, but he agreed to ask Plekhanov to retract the statement in *Vorwärts*. The Mensheviks at first refused, but, with a scandal threatening, Plekhanov agreed to publish a new letter announcing Gapon's decision not to identify himself with any particular party, but to work toward the unification of all revolutionary elements in a common front.<sup>6</sup>

The Socialist Revolutionaries did not burden him with theories: "Theories are not important to them," Gapon explained to Menshevik Deutsch, "only that the person possesses courage and be devoted to the people's cause. They do not demand anything from me, do not criticize my actions. On the contrary, they always praise me."<sup>7</sup> Gapon, expecting revolution in Russia momentarily, was preparing himself to lead the workers. He believed that all he had to do was unify the revolutionary parties and then make a personal appeal to the people of Russia. If need be, he was willing to lead the revolutionary armies on horseback, to be another Napoleon. He practiced shooting a pistol, first using a toy pistol with suction cups for target practice, then a real pistol at a local shooting gallery. He took fencing lessons, horseback riding, and learned how to make dynamite and bombs. He considered these activities very important and pursued them diligently, according to a rigorous schedule.<sup>8</sup>

By inclination and temperament, Gapon was more at home with the Socialist Revolutionaries, who emphasized the force of individual action and revolutionary voluntarism. Rutenberg and his associates catered to these aspects

<sup>6</sup> This episode is described by Deich, p. 136, and by A. S., p. 179, who wrote that Gapon had "escaped" from the Social Democrats. The new letter of Gapon with an editorial explanation was published in *Iskra*, no. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Deich, p. 143.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

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in Gapon's character and quickly weaned him away from the more theoretically oriented Marxists. They took him to Paris, where he was flattered by the attentions of the leaders of the French Left, including Clemenceau and Jaurès.<sup>9</sup> Gapon literally bloomed in the warm light of public attention. There was something naively childish in his enjoyment of his fame. He could stand lost in rapture in front of a stationery shop where a postcard with his portrait was displayed.<sup>10</sup> He was particularly pleased by the publicity in the foreign press and constantly asked his companions to translate stories about him. The fact that the stories were often sheer inventions did not bother Gapon; indeed, he seemed to like them all the more.<sup>11</sup>

Intending to unify all revolutionary elements around himself, Gapon announced the formation of a supra-party "Revolutionary Combat Committee"<sup>12</sup> and called for a unity conference of all revolutionary parties. He felt that the prestige of his name would be sufficient to overcome ideological wranglings. Party theoreticians seemed to him only quarrelsome intellectuals who dissipated their time and energies in useless arguments while all of Russia waited for action. With characteristic bluntness, he commented, "One should grab them by their hair and drag them together; otherwise no good will come from anything."<sup>13</sup>

Gapon's call for the conference evoked little enthusiasm,

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144, and Rutenberg, *Ubiistvo Gapona*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Rutenberg, *Ubiistvo Gapona*, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> For example, A. S. recalled a story in a Belgian paper about Gapon giving his "pastoral blessings" to young terrorists departing for Russia. It described Gapon as speaking French with a slight accent. The story pleased Gapon, who knew it to be a complete fabrication but explained his obvious pleasure on the grounds that all publicity was good for his cause (A. S., p. 185).

<sup>12</sup> The "Revolutionary Combat Committee," composed of Gapon, Catherine Breshkovskaia, and Prince Dmitrii Khilkov, was to replace the terrorist wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries, the "Battle Organization." See Chernov, *Pered burei: Vospomonaniia*, p. 234; Savinkov, *Memoirs of a Terrorist*, p. 125; the Okhrana report no. 45, April 18/5, 1905, in Okhrana Archives, XI(5), folder 1; and the letter from Azef to Rataev of April 17, 1905, in "Doneseniia Evno Azefa," pp. 224-225.

<sup>13</sup> A. S., p. 181.

particularly among the Social Democrats. By then, the revolutionary leadership was growing weary of Gapon's blustering, and one of the editors of *Iskra*, A. Martynov, quite candidly wrote: "At first we did not interfere with his 'day-dreaming,' wishing to exploit his popularity among the St. Petersburg workers for the cause of the Revolution. But very quickly we became convinced that no further benefit could be squeezed out of him. . . ." <sup>14</sup> However, Gapon was still too popular to be treated with disdain. Only Plekhanov had enough prestige to turn down Gapon's invitation, while the rest of the Social Democratic organizations, including Lenin's Bolsheviks, accepted it with misgivings. The representative of the Jewish Bund, Vladimir Medem, spoke for the rest of Social Democracy when he wrote: "We came without enthusiasm and only waited for an opportunity to free ourselves from this undertaking." <sup>15</sup>

Some of the most prominent people in the Russian revolutionary movement gathered for the conference on April 3 at Shishko's home in Geneva. Gapon was in the center of activity, but he was completely out of place among the intellectual revolutionary elite. His opening statement was almost embarrassing, as Medem recalled: "The impression was that of a *muzhik* who had gotten into an educated company and did not know how to behave himself. We sat with our eyes cast down. It was pitiful." <sup>16</sup> As soon as an opportunity presented itself, the Social Democrats walked out. <sup>17</sup> Most of the remaining conferees were adherents of populist and national revolutionary movements. Gapon's proposal for the formation of his "Combat Committee" was side-tracked, to his disappointment, and he did not succeed in his ambition to unite the revolutionary parties. <sup>18</sup>

After the failure of the unity conference, Gapon decided

<sup>14</sup> Martynov-Pikker, "Vospominaniia revoliutsionera," p. 279.

<sup>15</sup> Medem, *Fun main Leben* (in Yiddish), vol. II, p. 74. I am indebted to the late Gregorii Ia. Aronson for bringing this work to my attention and for providing me with translations of the pertinent sections.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>18</sup> A. S., p. 184, described Gapon's participation in the conference.

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to join the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries. He promptly exasperated the leadership by demanding to be co-opted into the highest level of party leadership and be informed of all party affairs, while at the same time continuing to act on his own with no concern for party discipline. The Socialist Revolutionary leader Victor Chernov aptly summed up his impressions of Gapon: "A party man, no matter what party, Gapon never was, nor was he capable of being one."<sup>19</sup> Chernov further explained:

Even if Gapon genuinely intended to follow a certain line of behavior, he could not do so. He would violate this promise, as he violated every promise he made to himself. At the first opportunity he would find it more tactically advantageous to act in a different manner. If you want, he was a complete and absolute anarchist, incapable of being a regular party member. Every organization he could conceive was only a super-structure of his unlimited authority. He alone had to be in the center of everything, know everything, hold in his hands the strings of the organization and manipulate the people tied to them in whatever manner he saw fit.<sup>20</sup>

The Socialist Revolutionaries soon wearied of Gapon and refused to co-opt him into their central committee. Gapon was told that he "could consider himself completely unrestricted by the party," and was free to act as he wished.<sup>21</sup>

Although Gapon was formally excluded from the principal revolutionary parties, he remained on friendly terms with most of their leaders. He was particularly attached to Plekhanov, whom he called his "respected teacher."<sup>22</sup> Gapon frequently visited Lenin, who was very curious about the priest and willing to listen. As Krupskaja remembered: "In Geneva Gapon began to visit us frequently. He

<sup>19</sup> Chernov (writing under the pseudonym Lenuar), "Lichnye vospominaniia o G. Gaponе," p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168, and A. S., p. 184.

<sup>22</sup> Deich, p. 146.



talked a lot. Vladimir Il'ich listened attentively, trying to discern in his accounts the features of the approaching revolution."<sup>23</sup> Lenin's conversations with Gapon helped persuade him to alter the Bolshevik agrarian policy.<sup>24</sup> Leo Deutsch recalled how he spent many hours over a glass of beer with Gapon. Gapon was anxious to tell anyone who would listen of his role in organizing the workers of St. Petersburg. He spoke surprisingly frankly of himself, his family, his plans, his connections with Zubatov and the police. Deutsch, recalling these talks, commented that he had never met anyone who "was more sincere and frank."<sup>25</sup>

Although the revolutionary leadership soon lost hope of converting Gapon into a reliable party man, still his name was internationally known. He was besieged with lucrative offers for publications, speaking tours, and interviews. Gapon welcomed the prospect of gaining a public forum for himself and funds for independent activities. His common law wife, A. Uzdaleva, joined him in exile, and in the middle of May they moved to London. Gapon received a considerable sum from an English publisher for writing his autobiography. The book was completed in only two months, with Gapon dictating it to an editor who translated it into English. In London, away from the emigré politics of Geneva, Gapon devoted himself to laying the foundations for reactivating the Assembly. He sent emissaries to St. Petersburg with instructions and funds. These contacts helped rekindle the enthusiasm of his followers, and the idea of the Assembly was kept alive.<sup>26</sup> While in London, Gapon was asked to write an appeal against anti-Semitism. He readily agreed, wrote a pamphlet against Jewish pogroms, and refused to accept a share of the royalties offered him.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Krupskaja, "g-o-e ianvaria i Lenin."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Deich, p. 137.

<sup>26</sup> Azef, in a letter of May 31, 1905, to the head of the Okhrana foreign service ("Doneseniia," p. 225), wrote that the matter of Gapon's contacts with his workers, "is a very serious business."

<sup>27</sup> A. S., pp. 187-189, 196. A. S. was responsible for persuading Gapon to write the pamphlet published under the title, *Poslanie k russkomu krest'ianskomu i rabochemu narodu ot Georgiia Gapona* (n.p., 1905), 24 pp.

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But Gapon could not stay away from Geneva long, and by the end of July he was back in the vortex of political intrigues. In June a mutiny broke out on the battleship *Potemkin*, the flagship of the Black Sea fleet. A delegation of the mutinous sailors arrived in Geneva with a message addressed directly to Gapon. Gapon took the cause of the sailors to heart and spent all his time collecting money and purchasing supplies for them. He and their leader, Afanasii Matiushenko, became inseparable.<sup>28</sup> Both were of peasant origin and products of the mass upheaval of 1905—both were out of place among the party intelligentsia of Geneva.

By the end of the summer, Gapon had become involved in a bizarre plot to smuggle arms into Russia. Behind this plot stood a former Japanese attaché in St. Petersburg, Colonel Motojiro Akashi, who was willing to provide funds to Russian revolutionaries through a Finnish revolutionary, Koni Zilliacus. The Socialist Revolutionaries planned to land a boat carrying arms in Finland. Loaded with a cargo of weapons, a small steamer, the *John Grafton*, set out for the Baltic Sea in early August with Gapon as one of its passengers.<sup>29</sup> The expedition was plagued with difficulties from the very start. Rutenberg was sent to Russia to prepare to receive the arms shipment, but upon arrival in Russia, he was arrested.<sup>30</sup> The *John Grafton* ran aground off the Finnish coast in the Gulf of Bothnia. Some boxes of arms were hastily hidden on a nearby island before the ship was abandoned. The next day, however, the authorities discovered the ship and the hidden caches of arms. Only a small quantity of weapons reached the Finnish revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Krupskaja, "9-oe ianvaria i Lenin."

<sup>29</sup> The most complete recent account in English of the affair is in Furtell, *Northern Underground*, chapter 4: "The Voyage of the *John Grafton*," pp. 66-85; see also the bibliography, pp. 205-207. Several accounts by participants are included in Pozner, ed., *Boevaia gruppa pri TsK RSDRP (1905-1907 gg.)*, section IX: "Dzhon Grafton," pp. 207-275. See also the account of Posse, *Moi zhiznennyi put'*, who was a passenger on the voyage.

<sup>30</sup> Rutenberg, p. 44-45.

<sup>31</sup> Socialist Revolutionaries accused Gapon of trying to deliver the arms to the Bolsheviks. See Chernov, *Pered burei*, p. 235.

Gapon's role in this affair was nominal; he was used as a "convenient figurehead" to camouflage the source of money. A recent study rightly concluded that "Gapon proved incompetent in practical work and contributed to the enterprise little more than the glamour of his name."<sup>32</sup> Gapon became enthusiastically involved because it was an opportunity to rehabilitate himself as a revolutionary. Lenin encouraged him, saying that this was the transition "from words to deeds."<sup>33</sup> Besides, Gapon was anxious to contact his followers in St. Petersburg and organize the workers for an armed rebellion. His conception of the particulars of this venture was extremely vague and utterly naive. In one instance he seriously elaborated a plan for about twelve thousand organized workers to gather "secretly" one night at a secluded wharf to receive guns from a ship that would quietly slip into the harbor.<sup>34</sup>

Gapon had brought along several individuals to help him rebuild the Assembly, including a journalist, V. A. Posse, who was to edit a newspaper for the organization. In Finland, Gapon called a meeting of his closest lieutenants; Kuzin, Karelin, and Varnashev came from St. Petersburg, and Nikolai Petrov followed Gapon from abroad.<sup>35</sup> The meeting was disappointing. In his absence, many of Gapon's former followers had joined revolutionary parties. The leadership of the Assembly could not keep up with the increasing militancy of the workers, and Gapon was losing touch with the situation in St. Petersburg. In discussions among themselves, Gapon's aides were taken aback to discover that Gapon had deliberately misled them by conveying the impression that he had the workers solidly behind him and that he was prominent among the revolutionary leaders abroad. The disappointment of Gapon's aides was so apparent that Posse, supported by Petrov, conspired to take over the remnants of the organization and remove Gapon from his position. Disheartened as they were, Gapon's disciples refused to join the conspiracy.<sup>36</sup> Despite

<sup>32</sup> Furtell, p. 67.

<sup>33</sup> Krupskaja, "9-oe ianvaria i Lenin."

<sup>34</sup> A. S., p. 190.

<sup>35</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Zapiski o Gapone," p. 39.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40ff.; and Posse, pp. 391-397.

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their misgivings, they were still willing to trust Gapon. The future of their organization depended solely on his personal leadership; without him, the workers of St. Petersburg would soon drift away and forget the Assembly.

After the meeting, Gapon went back into exile. His isolation and the scorn heaped on him by the exiled party regulars only strengthened his resolve to prove himself a true revolutionary. The worse his relations with the parties grew, the more preoccupied he became with the idea of recreating his old organization. He told some followers:

I will risk everything . . . without the branches I am like a fish out of water. They understand me; there we speak the same language, which is incomprehensible to the party people, whose minds are lost in the fog of abstract theories.<sup>37</sup>

He berated the revolutionaries for their unwillingness to forego their differences and bitterly resented party efforts to recruit his supporters. He became openly anti-intelligentsia, advocating the creation of a mass supra-party labor organization that would rely on direct action in defending workers' interests. The Russian Anarchists supported this plan.<sup>38</sup> French Syndicalism also attracted his attention, but above all he wanted to get back to Russia, to his workers. Gapon was convinced that they would again follow him if only he appeared among them. The Russian masses were waiting for him, as he once said:

All means are justified . . . the end justifies the means. . . . My end is sacred—to lead the suffering people out of an unbearable situation and to deliver them from oppression. . . . I suffered through all this in my soul, and these are my thoughts, my purpose, while I live here and wait my appointed hour.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Sizov, "Moi vstrechi s Georgiem Gaponom," p. 577.

<sup>38</sup> See the leading editorial, "Russkii rabochii souiz," in the organ of the Anarchists *Khleb i volia*, no. 21-22 (August-September 1905).

<sup>39</sup> Sizov, p. 569.

The revolutionary tide in Russia, meanwhile, flowed unabated. The turmoil begun on January 9 eventually engulfed the entire country. By summer serious disturbances broke out in the countryside and among the military forces. In early October a general strike completely paralyzed Russia and forced the autocracy to grant sweeping political concessions. The October Manifesto promised basic civic liberties and a national representative assembly, concessions interpreted by many as the establishment of a constitutional regime in Russia. The events in Russia set the émigré colonies abroad into feverish activity. Almost everyone yearned to return to Russia, and Gapon was literally beside himself. He exclaimed to an acquaintance:

I want to go to Russia. There is no air to breathe here, the air is suffocating, the soul demands open spaces. You heard what the leaders are saying here. This should be said in Russia, not here.<sup>40</sup>

Recognizing the growing power of Social Democracy among the workers, Gapon offered to join the party if its two factions would unite. He acted as an intermediary between Lenin and Plekhanov,<sup>41</sup> but little came of the negotiations, and in early November Gapon departed for St. Petersburg.

Gapon found the situation in Russia, and particularly in St. Petersburg, radically different from the one he had left behind in January. The tsarist regime seemed barely able to hold the reins of power. Although the concessions embodied in the October Manifesto pacified the more moderate elements, the socialists looked upon these reforms as the final gasps of the old regime. It seemed the time was ripe for one final assault to topple the autocracy. The end of October and the beginning of November witnessed increasing instances of mutinous behavior among the military. Particularly severe were the cases of open rebellion among

<sup>40</sup> Sizov, p. 569.

<sup>41</sup> Deich, p. 152; See also L. Deich, ed., *Gruppa "Osvobozhdeniia truda,"* vol. IV, p. 346, note 1.

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the sailors of Kronstadt, the naval fortress guarding St. Petersburg; the uprising among the sailors of the Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol; disturbances in Vladivostok; and frequent cases of insubordination among the troops returning from the war.

The most turbulent and determined revolutionary forces, however, were in the cities. The revolutionary parties had grown in strength, and the Social Democrats now held sway over the workers. In St. Petersburg the October strike wave led to the creation of a council of worker representatives to coordinate strike activities. This spontaneous form of mass representation, the St. Petersburg soviet, quickly fell under the leadership of socialists and became a political body, competing with the government for the allegiance of the urban working class. Although its instructions and directives were illegal, the workers were willing to follow them, and the St. Petersburg soviet exerted national influence.

The October concessions only encouraged the revolutionaries to redouble their efforts and continue the struggle to the end. They envisaged an armed insurrection against the tsarist regime. The supporters of the autocracy were determined to restore order by repression if the concessions failed to pacify the country. Gapon arrived in St. Petersburg just as both sides were preparing for the inevitable showdown. His arrival was not welcomed by either side.

The revolutionaries regarded Gapon with suspicion. Although he had seriously compromised himself as a revolutionary, he still commanded prestige and a following among the Russian masses. The revolutionary parties had built their power in St. Petersburg on those former followers of Gapon who had been converted to revolutionary ideology, but they feared that the masses could still be swayed by Gapon's demagoguery. If Gapon began to compete with the revolutionary parties, he might persuade the more moderate elements among the workers to accept the concessions. No one could forget the drawing power of Gapon, and his effort to build his own organization constituted a serious challenge to the revolutionary movement.

Gapon realized that his espousal of the revolutionary cause had been an emotional reaction to Bloody Sunday, and that he had more in common with the supporters of the regime than with the revolutionary intelligentsia. The main thrust of his appeal to the workers had been the promise of change within the existing structure. His following was built on the merger of Russian traditionalism with elements of reform. Gapon could accept in good conscience the concessions granted in October, as they were more extensive than the demands of the petition of January 9. Conversations with his lieutenants confirmed this: not firebrand militancy, but an appeal to moderation and gradualism would draw workers to him. In short, he had to build his new organization on the foundation that had worked so well before Bloody Sunday. For this purpose he needed official sanction for the reactivation of the Assembly, and he sought rapprochement with the authorities.

Prior to his arrival in St. Petersburg, Gapon's followers petitioned for amnesty for him and appealed to Witte and other officials for permission to reopen the Assembly branches. Gapon continued their efforts but failed to obtain audiences with either Witte, now prime minister, or Petr N. Durnovo, minister of the interior.<sup>42</sup> Finally A. I. Matiushenskii, the journalist who had helped Gapon edit the petition, met with Witte on November 12 to discuss Gapon and the Assembly. Matiushenskii's audience brought a shadowy character into the picture—I. F. Manasevich-Manuilov, a former secret agent in the Russian intelligence service, who had been a special agent for Plehve. Manasevich-Manuilov learned of Gapon's presence in St. Petersburg from Okhrana sources and reported directly to Witte, who immediately wanted Gapon arrested. In the discussion that followed, Witte agreed that to arrest Gapon at once would

<sup>42</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Zapiski o Gapone," pp. 49-54; *Russkie vedomosti*, November 15, 1905, p. 2, describes the efforts of Gaponovites. Gapon's attempts to contact Witte and Durnovo are reported in Dillon, *The Eclipse of Russia*, pp. 164-165.

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only help stir up the workers at a very critical moment. On the other hand, the impending showdown with the soviet might give Gapon an opportunity to emerge as the leader of the insurgent workers again. Witte finally instructed Manasevich-Manuilov to threaten Gapon with arrest if he refused to leave Russia.

Through Matiushenskii, Manasevich-Manuilov met with Gapon and after a long discussion convinced him to leave Russia by promising him rehabilitation and the reopening of the Assembly in the future.<sup>43</sup> In return, Gapon was to come out openly in support of Witte and condemn all further insurrectionary activity against the regime. Gapon was given 500 rubles for travel expenses and was told to leave as soon as possible.<sup>44</sup> Gapon gathered his assistants, announced that the Assembly would soon be reopened, and told them to proceed with the organizational work. He gave them 1,000 rubles and promised more money to come. Matiushenskii was designated to act as his representative. Gapon instructed his followers to be wary of the intelligentsia:

Proceed straight ahead and do not fall under the influence of any party people; carry on your business by yourself. Moreover, I ask you, comrades, accept everyone who wants to join the union, especially the elderly. Do not pay any attention to what people say about some of them, let them find friends among us.<sup>45</sup>

On November 21 the Gaponovites held an open organizational meeting at *Soliani gorodok*. The large hall was filled to capacity and, despite some heckling from radicals, the overwhelming majority favored reopening the branches. Varnashev was chosen to conduct the affairs of the orga-

<sup>43</sup> Statements of Manasevich-Manuilov of February 13, 1906, and December 25, 1909, in "Po delu Matiushenskogo," Witte papers, Columbia University Russian Archive.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*; Gapon's version in Rutenberg, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Zapiski o Gapone," p. 55.



nization.<sup>46</sup> The revolutionary parties saw the resurrection of Gapon and his Assembly as a direct threat. In rapid succession, various revolutionary organizations took a firm stand against the Assembly. The executive committee of the soviet opposed it, and even Gapon's friend Rutenberg spoke against it.<sup>47</sup> A combined meeting of Social Democratic organizations condemned Gaponovite activities,<sup>48</sup> and a few days later a meeting of the central bureau of the labor unions in St. Petersburg, presided over by S. Somov (the same Somov who, in the days preceding Bloody Sunday, did not mind being called a "Gaponovite Social Democrat") voted to condemn Gaponovite activity as an "unnecessary hindrance to the promotion of trade unionism."<sup>49</sup>

The revolutionary organizations were, of course, unaware of Gapon's arrangements with Witte. Acting in good faith, Witte requested funds from V. I. Timiriazev, minister of trade and industry, for reopening the Assembly. Matiu-shenskii and Manasevich-Manuilov convinced Timiriazev that 30,000 rubles were needed to finance the organization. The funds were obtained and the sequestered property of the old organization returned by the minister of the interior. But Durnovo continued to postpone official permission to reopen the branches.<sup>50</sup>

In the meantime Gapon was abroad, fulfilling his part of the bargain. Whenever possible he gave press interviews praising Witte and calling for moderation. This, of course, earned him vehement denunciations from the revolutionaries and the sympathetic foreign press. Suddenly the revolutionary hero had become an ardent defender of the tsarist government. As events in Russia moved toward the December climax, Witte sent Varnashev and Kuzin abroad with

<sup>46</sup> "Gaponovtsy," *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 5, January 24, 1906, p. 3. See also eyewitness accounts of the meeting in Nevison, *The Dawn in Russia*, pp. 50-59. The newspaper *Rus'* carried extensive coverage of activity among the Gaponovites during this period.

<sup>47</sup> Rutenberg, p. 48.

<sup>48</sup> *Rus'*, November 20, 1905.

<sup>49</sup> Kats and Milonov, eds., 1905: *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, p. 292.

<sup>50</sup> Statement of Durnovo cited in N. Petrov, "Gapon i graf Vitte," p. 21.

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a special appeal to be signed by Gapon. Witte assigned great importance to Gapon's support and was anxious to have the appeal printed and distributed as soon as possible. But Durnovo "most strenuously objected to the necessity of this expenditure," and only Witte's insistence persuaded the former to release the necessary funds.<sup>51</sup> However, by the time the appeal was finally printed, it was too late to affect the developments in Russia.

The December armed uprising in Moscow was the high point of the revolutionary tide. The arrest of the St. Petersburg soviet and the subsequent ruthless suppression of the Moscow resistance strengthened the hand of the conservatives, who were determined to pacify the country by force. After December conservatives dominated the government, and even Witte advocated firmness in dealing with the opposition.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile Gapon was getting restless in Europe. The December uprising found him in Nice on the way to Italy. While in Monte Carlo he was taken on a sightseeing visit to a casino. There he was recognized and soon the sensational news was out: Father Gapon gambling in Monte Carlo while workers fight on the barricades!<sup>53</sup> Despite Gapon's feeble efforts to exculpate himself, the damage was done. His personal reputation suffered irreparable harm<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18; the text of the appeal is given, pp. 23-26.

<sup>52</sup> The tsar wrote his mother, "As for Witte, since the happenings in Moscow he has radically changed his views: now he wants to hang and shoot everybody." See Edward J. Bing, ed., *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar*; letter of January 12, 1906, p. 211.

<sup>53</sup> The Paris edition of the *New York Tribune* carried a brief note of Gapon's visit to the casino on December 24, 1905, p. 3. The regular edition expanded the news item, and the next day gave it a prominent space with pictures of barricades in Moscow contrasted with a picture of the casino flanked by photographs of Gapon and Grand Duke Cyril under the caption. "Grand Duke Cyril faces Father Gapon in Monte Carlo at the same roulette table" (*New York Tribune*, December 25, 1905, p. 4).

<sup>54</sup> At first Gapon denied his visit to the casino, then tried to explain that he went simply out of curiosity as a tourist. He maintained to the correspondent of the *New York Herald* (December 29, 1905) that to be on the Riviera and not visit a casino was like being in Rome and not seeing the Pope.

as the press related elaborate accounts of his debauchery, gambling with workers' money, and so on.<sup>55</sup>

Smarting from personal attacks, Gapon was also burdened by the news from Russia. At first the intercession of Timiriazev and Witte helped to reopen some branches, but in the repression following the Moscow uprising the branches were closed again and not even permitted to hold Christmas parties for children.<sup>56</sup> At the end of December Gapon set off for Finland to reestablish contacts with his followers and personally resume direction of their activities. From discussions with Varnashev, he learned that only part of the money given to Matiushenskii had been turned over to the organization. Suspecting foul play, the Gaponovites decided to keep the matter secret and try to locate Matiushenskii, who had disappeared from the capital with most of the money given him by Timiriazev. By this time the circle of people who knew that the Gaponovite efforts were backed by the government was expanding. Gapon told Rutenberg that his entire committee had approved the negotiations with Witte.<sup>57</sup>

Gapon continued to enjoy the support of Witte and Timiriazev, who repeatedly made efforts to persuade the minister of the interior to support the Assembly,<sup>58</sup> but the situation in Russia had changed. Witte no longer enjoyed the confidence of Nicholas II, and the matter of Gapon was now more in the hands of the ministry of interior. Gapon was given provisional permission to remain in Russia, but the final disposition of his case rested with Durnovo. In the

<sup>55</sup> For a good example of such stories, see *New York Tribune*, May 27, 1906, part v, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> See the section "Letters to the editor," *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 5 (January 24), 1906, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Rutenberg, p. 51. Karelin wrote in "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 115, that Gapon was against accepting money from the government, "but the workers insisted."

<sup>58</sup> As late as January 22, 1906, Timiriazev personally wrote to the city governor on behalf of the Assembly. See the copy of the reply in "Po delu Matiushenskogo," Witte papers, Columbia University Russian Archive. On February 2, 1906, Witte wrote Durnovo on the same matter. See his letter in Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," p. 302.

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middle of January his case was taken away from Manasevich-Manuilov and assigned to the vice-director of the police department, the head of the Special Section of secret agents, Petr I. Rachkovskii. An experienced policeman, Rachkovskii began an intricate game calculated to remove Gapon from the political scene in Russia. He first flattered Gapon, welcoming him back into the fold and promising him great honors. He pretended to agree with Gapon's views on the situation in Russia, supporting his proposals for organizing workers, and even suggesting that Gapon might consider filling Rachkovskii's shoes when he retired.<sup>59</sup> Gapon must have realized that he was involved in a game, but he had great faith in his ability to manipulate people and felt equal to matching wits with Rachkovskii. The high stakes of the game and the trappings of power, wealth, and prestige must have fascinated him. After all, he was negotiating with some of the most important individuals in the empire. Little by little, Rachkovskii drew him in.

Prompted by Rachkovskii, to win back the confidence of the government, Gapon wrote his "confession." He explained that Bloody Sunday was a tragic misfortune which he had tried to prevent by obtaining concessions for the workers. Gapon denied ever conspiring against the dynasty or the person of the emperor, but added that "to me and my comrades . . . the well-being of the entire Russian people is above all." He excused his call to revolutionary uprising as the natural effect of anger, and claimed that he had admitted his mistake publicly before getting in touch with Witte:

*All this I did out of deep conviction that the only solution assuring the well-being of Russia and her sovereign is the lawful reorganization of Russia on the foundations proclaimed from the throne in the Manifesto of October Seventeenth. These are the convictions which I now hold and will hold in the future. In the spirit of these convictions I am prepared*

<sup>59</sup> Rutenberg, pp. 52 and 55.

to work now for the benefit of the motherland as selflessly and fearlessly as I did on the field of public endeavor prior to January ninth. . . .<sup>60</sup>

Rachkovskii told Gapon that the "confession" did not satisfy his superiors. If Gapon was anxious to work for the preservation of the regime, he could prove his loyalty by providing information about their common adversaries. Although Rachkovskii must have known that Gapon had nothing to divulge, he persisted. Eventually the discussion turned to the Socialist Revolutionary terrorists and Rutenberg. Gapon was led to believe that if Rutenberg could be persuaded to work with the police, the branches would be reopened and Gapon would get a very large reward.<sup>61</sup> Gapon, who was now thoroughly compromised in the public eye, had little to lose. He agreed. Contacting Rutenberg, Gapon swore him to secrecy and told him of his contacts with the government and the police.<sup>62</sup>

The next day (February 7) Gapon met again with Rachkovskii and the head of the St. Petersburg Okhrana, Colonel A. V. Gerasimov. Gerasimov quickly dismissed the former hero of Bloody Sunday, commenting, "Gapon is not worth a kopeck."<sup>63</sup> His discussion with Gapon, he later wrote, "made it clear to me that Gapon spoke nonsense. His readiness to betray everything was clear, but he knew nothing, and this convinced me that he was a harmless enemy and a useless friend."<sup>64</sup> Despite Gerasimov's objections, Rachkovskii insisted on proceeding with the case.

That same day Gapon spoke with Rutenberg again. After recounting his talks with the police and showing Rutenberg

<sup>60</sup> A copy of the "confession" was found in the Witte papers, and it was published in, "Pis'mo Gaponu," *KA*, no. 2(9) 1925, pp. 294-297; and in 1905, note 24 on pp. 812-894.

<sup>61</sup> While Rachkovskii was encouraging Gapon with his promises, the Okhrana and the city governor clearly expressed their opposition to reopening the Assembly. See Bukhbinder, "K istorii Sobraniia," pp. 301-302 and 303.

<sup>62</sup> Rutenberg, pp. 50ff.

<sup>63</sup> A. V. Gerasimoff, *Der Kampf gegen die erste russische Revolution*, p. 96.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

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a copy of his "confession," Gapon came to the heart of the matter. Rachkovskii was anxious to acquire the services of Rutenberg and was willing to pay good money. Boldly, Gapon began unfolding his plan that they should double-cross the police by becoming double agents. If Rutenberg would cooperate, they could stage a phony plot to assassinate one of the chief ministers and then inform the police about it. The grateful authorities would reward them both, the Assembly would be reopened, and the conspirators would be warned in time to escape. Gapon would organize the workers and confront the government with an even greater "ninth of January."<sup>65</sup> Gapon said he realized that the whole thing was loathsome and degrading, but for the sacred cause of liberating the working class, Gapon told Rutenberg, "I would deal not only with Rachkovskii, but with the devil himself."<sup>66</sup> He even talked of personally assassinating Witte, Durnovo, Rachkovskii, and Gerasimov as a final act of retribution to regain public confidence and prove his devotion to the cause.<sup>67</sup>

This incredible plan was certainly in Gapon's style, but to Rutenberg it only meant that Gapon was involving him with the police. By now he knew enough of Gapon's methods to be thoroughly suspicious of them. His ties with Gapon helped him attain a certain prominence in the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries, and he was closely connected with some leaders of the terrorist Battle Organization. Rutenberg was sure that Gapon's schemes would not remain secret for long. Betrayal was a charge not taken lightly by the terrorists, and Rutenberg was probably anxious to clear himself before his name became linked to Gapon's intrigues. As a member of the party he was obligated to report his talks with Gapon anyway, and accordingly he sought out the Socialist Revolutionary Central Committee.

Before he could contact the central committee, Rutenberg read an exposé of Gapon's dealings with Witte made

<sup>65</sup> Rutenberg, pp. 71 and 76.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55 and 79.

public by Gapon's former protégé, N. Petrov.<sup>68</sup> The news immediately created a sensation, and personal recriminations between Petrov and the Gaponovites filled the pages of the press. Even newspapers that had been sympathetic to Gapon were openly critical, and whatever remained of his public image as the hero of Bloody Sunday was thoroughly soiled. Witte hastened to disassociate himself from Gapon, blaming everything on Timiriazev, who was forced to resign.<sup>69</sup>

The revelations in the press made it that much more important for Rutenberg to contact the central committee. He met with Evno Azef, the head of the Battle Organization, and Boris Savinkov, his second-in-command (although not a member of the central committee). To them Rutenberg related his dealings with Gapon. They were appalled, and Azef stated that Gapon should be "done away with like a *viper!*"<sup>70</sup> However, all three had good personal reasons to wish him dead. Savinkov had had serious altercations with Gapon before,<sup>71</sup> and Azef, himself a double agent working under Rachkovskii, was very leery of police agents penetrating his organization.<sup>72</sup> Personal feelings, however, had to be taken into account along with the party's considerations. V. Chernov, the head of the party, was summoned for a conference. After several days of discussion, it was decided that, despite everything, the name of Gapon was still revered by ordinary workers, and the only evidence of his

<sup>68</sup> Letter of N. Petrov, "Doloi masku i neizvestnost'," in *Rus' March* 8, 1906, pp. 4-5.

<sup>69</sup> Witte's own account is given in his memoirs, Vitte, vol. III, pp. 193-194; the statements of Timiriazev and Manasevich-Manuilov concerning their dealings with Gapon are included in "Po delu Matiushenskogo," Witte papers, Columbia University Russian Archive. The evidence shows that Witte's part in the affair was more extensive than he admits in his memoirs.

<sup>70</sup> Rutenberg, p. 62. Italics in the original.

<sup>71</sup> See for example Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> Gapon lived with Azef in Paris for a while and might have been able to disclose to the police some information which Azef preferred to keep secret from his superiors, who did not know for certain the position he held in the party.

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contacts with the police were the words of Rutenberg. If Gapon were killed, his death could be ascribed to 'political motives, and the party (party intelligentsia in general) would be accused of killing him over political differences. Fearing the reaction of the workers, the party leaders rejected the murder of Gapon alone and instead decided to take the opportunity to kill the hated Rachkovskii as well. Rutenberg at first demurred, but then agreed to take on the mission, accept Gapon's proposal and meet with Rachkovskii.<sup>73</sup> He was then to organize a double assassination, since their murder together would be sufficient proof of Gapon's implication with the police.<sup>74</sup> Rutenberg was assigned a member of the Battle Organization to assist him directly and several other terrorists to help him when needed.

In the meantime, new complications were arising. Two of Gapon's assistants, Kuzin and P. P. Cheremukhin (whose real name was I. Sychev) followed Matiushenskii to Saratov and, with the help of police, recovered the stolen money. Kuzin was arrested on the way back, ostensibly for propaganda among the peasants, and the money was sequestered. In the press, Petrov charged that both Kuzin and Cheremukhin were paid large sums of money by Gapon. On his return Cheremukhin demanded an explanation, but Petrov failed to appear at the meeting of the Gaponovite committee. In despair, Cheremukhin told the meeting:

In his letter Petrov wrote that we went with a detective, but that is a lie! I went with an honest comrade and honestly fulfilled the duty of my sacred obligation before my comrades. Where is the truth? There is no truth in this world!

Quickly pulling out a revolver, Cheremukhin shouted, "Here is the witness to my honesty!" and, before he could be stopped, shot himself. He died cursing Petrov.<sup>75</sup> Once

<sup>73</sup> Rutenberg, p. 63.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; Savinkov, *Memoirs of a Terrorist*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>75</sup> See the letter signed by nineteen members of Gapon's committee who were present, and Gapon's statement in *Rus'*, February 21, 1906;



more vehement accusations filled the air. Gapon and his aides blamed Petrov for the death; Petrov denounced Gapon's dealings with the government. Gapon defended himself and demanded a public trial:

And then you will see that Georgii Gapon, unfrocked priest, deprived of his priestly status, loves his fatherland to the last drop of his blood, and will die a faithful guardian of the Russian liberation movement in the midst of the working masses, at his old post near the workers' organizations.<sup>76</sup>

The revelation of Gapon's dealings with Witte and the scandal of the Petrov affair left Gapon with only one hope: Rachkovskii's promise to permit the reopening of the branches.<sup>77</sup> The plan depended entirely on Rutenberg, who was now showing signs of weakening by agreeing to meet with Rachkovskii for the sum of 25,000 rubles paid in advance.<sup>78</sup> On March 4, Rutenberg was to meet Rachkovskii in a private room of a restaurant, but the latter, warned of an assassination plot, did not show up.<sup>79</sup>

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also the statement of Stroev, who was also present, in *Ogni*, no. 1 (March 19), 1906, p. 15.

<sup>76</sup> Letter in *Rus'*, March 13, 1906, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> By then the police authorities in St. Petersburg rejected any resumption of activities by Gaponovites.

<sup>78</sup> Rutenberg, p. 73. The sums of money ostensibly offered by Rachkovskii were inordinately high. Gapon mentioned offers of up to 200,000 rubles, yet the actual sums paid to police agents were not even within the range of Rachkovskii's offers. For example, even such a proven, valuable secret agent as Azef was receiving only 500 rubles a month for his services.

<sup>79</sup> Rachkovskii was warned of the plot by the Okhrana. Gerasimoff (*op. cit.*, p. 97) wrote, "One of my agents informed me of the general outline of the plan of the double assassination: Rachkovskii and Gapon." Rachkovskii had his own network of agents, but it is impossible to tell how soon he knew of the particulars of the plot from his own sources. During 1905 Azef was involved in a number of assassinations of prominent officials, including the uncle of the tsar, Grand Duke Sergius. While the revolutionary movement was on the upswing, he avoided contacts with his police mentors, but now he sought rapprochement with Rachkovskii. The Gapon affair offered him an opportunity to gain the favor of his superior. He wrote a letter to

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Gapon was now caught in the middle, between the police and the terrorists: while Rachkovskii promised large sums of money, reopening the branches and other benefits, Rutenberg offered his services at a high price.<sup>80</sup> Thus it seemed to Gapon that if he could only get the two together, his problems would be solved. Yet Rachkovskii kept putting stumbling blocks before him. Knowing full well what Rutenberg planned, Rachkovskii demanded that, as a sign of good faith, Rutenberg provide some information before they met. Rachkovskii promised a considerable monetary reward, but Rutenberg refused, demanding a meeting with Rachkovskii first. When, after three weeks of fruitless effort, Rutenberg failed to reach Rachkovskii, he decided to report the mission a failure. According to his own account, Rutenberg contacted Azef, who berated him for cowardice and incompetence and told him to kill Gapon alone. Rutenberg felt ill and completely broken after the visit with Azef.<sup>81</sup> A week later Rutenberg again requested to be relieved of the assignment, but Azef, representing the central committee, refused to reply, in effect reprimanding Rutenberg for failure to carry out his mission. Having no choice, Rutenberg then resolved "to execute the sentence of the central committee on Gapon alone."<sup>82</sup> He recruited a group of party members<sup>83</sup> and rented a quiet summer cottage in Ozerki, a little town north of St. Petersburg, near the Finnish border. Rutenberg enticed Gapon to the cottage, and there the "sentence" was carried out. Gapon's hands were tied, and he was hanged from a coat hook on the wall. Since

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Rachkovskii informing him of what Rutenberg and Gapon were planning. See Gerasimoff's statement to the "Chrezvychainaia sledstvennaia komissiiia Vremennogo pravitel'stva po rassledovaniuu po dolzhnosti deistvii byvshikh ministrov i prochikh," a copy of which is in the Nikolaevsky Archive, no. 132, box 3, item 16, p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> In his account, Rutenberg gives the impression that he reluctantly agreed to meet with Rachkovskii. This is doubtful, since his mission was to convince Gapon that he was ready, and anxious, to work for Rachkovskii.

<sup>81</sup> Rutenberg, pp. 77-78.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* According to Rutenberg he recruited party members from among the workers, one of whom knew Gapon well.

the hook was not high enough, the executioners sat on his shoulders, pushing him down until he was strangled.<sup>84</sup> The cottage was locked, and it was over a month before the body was discovered.

The next day Rutenberg reported to the central committee and asked the party to publicly announce the execution of its death sentence. The party leaders mulled over the problem for six days but refused to accept any responsibility for the murder of Gapon, labeling it Rutenberg's private affair. After Rutenberg had tentatively abandoned the mission, the central committee had agreed to participate in a public trial of Gapon. The party could not very well claim to have murdered the defendant, and so Rutenberg was left in an awkward position. Azef told him he could say and write whatever he wanted, but not a word about the central committee or the Battle Organization.<sup>85</sup> Rutenberg then composed a statement in the name of a "court of workers" listing charges against Gapon and announcing that he had been found guilty of betrayal by workers and executed. At first Rutenberg signed the statement, but later his signature was deleted.<sup>86</sup> Thus the terrorist "execution squad" became a "jury of workers" judging their former leader.

The disappearance of Gapon did not remain secret for long. His closest assistants were immediately alarmed. They knew of his dealings with the terrorists and the police. Starting in the first week of April, notices of his disappearance were widely circulated in the press. On April 6, Varnashev told reporters that he feared foul play, since on the day of his disappearance Gapon was meeting with representatives of the Battle Organization in Ozerki.<sup>87</sup> News

<sup>84</sup> See the statement of police officials on the discovery of the body, published as an appendix to Karelin, "Deviatoe ianvaria i Gapon," pp. 118-119; and the description of the examination of the body in "Ubiistvo Gapona," *Novoe vremia*, May 2, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Rutenberg, p. 93.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94. The letter appeared in many Russian papers on April 19, 1906.

<sup>87</sup> Simbirskii, *Pravda o Gaponie i "9-om ianvare,"* p. 221. See also *XX vek*, April 15, 1906, p. 4.

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items on Gapon appeared in the press almost daily. On April 10, 1906 (April 23, New Style), the *Manchester Guardian* carried an account of Gapon's death by hanging at the hands of "four" working-class revolutionaries. The story was said to have originated with one of the participants.<sup>88</sup> On April 11, the newspaper informed its readers that Gapon had frequent meetings with Rachkovskii.<sup>89</sup> Every day papers carried stories about the corpse of Gapon being found, only to deny them later. On April 14, Gapon's lawyer received a package with a Berlin postmark containing some of Gapon's personal belongings. On April 16, an article in *Novoe vremia* signed by one "Maska" (who turned out to be no other than Manasevich-Manuilov) traced Gapon's recent dealings with the Okhrana and Rutenberg in some detail and concluded that Rutenberg killed his "tempting demon," probably in Ozerki.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, when the unsigned statement about the "trial of workers" reached St. Petersburg and was published on April 19, it was lost amidst other sensational revelations about Gapon.

Although the police knew of the murder in Ozerki and had the particulars from Azef,<sup>91</sup> they were in no hurry to investigate. According to Gerasimov, the police did not know the exact location of the murder and had to search all the cottages on the Finnish border before the corpse was found.<sup>92</sup> This is hard to believe, since Ozerki was frequently mentioned in the press as the location of the murder, and Gapon had been followed there by police agents.<sup>93</sup> No doubt the police authorities deliberately avoided locating Gapon's body until the multiple revelations in the press diffused any possible worker reaction. The corpse was found

<sup>88</sup> "Father Gapon's End. Hanged Secretly by Revolutionaries," *Manchester Guardian*, April 23, 1906, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> *XX vek*, April 11, 1906, pp. 3-4.

<sup>90</sup> "Maska," "K ubiistvu Gapona," *Novoe vremia*, April 16, 1906, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Gerasimoff, p. 106.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Rutenberg, p. 84. Gapon left for Ozerki directly from the apartment of Manasevich-Manuilov; see Betskii and Pavlov, *Russkii Rokambol'*, p. 79.

only on April 30, when everyone was preoccupied with the convocation of the First State Duma.

The intricate plot linking the police and the revolutionary terrorists as conspirators in the murder of Gapon was never fully explained. Despite his protestations of interest in reviving Gapon's organization, Rachkovskii was clearly more interested in compromising Gapon through police dealings than in helping him regain his former status. He tempted the priest with promises and large sums of money, knowing full well Gapon's plans to double-cross him. Rachkovskii knew that destroying Gapon's reputation would undermine the myth of Bloody Sunday, and attributing the murder to revolutionary terrorists would further discredit the revolutionary movement in the public eye. Rachkovskii must have been pleased with the results.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, Gapon's murder was a serious embarrassment to the leadership of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Its members were furious with Rutenberg, accusing him of murdering Gapon for personal reasons and then trying to pass it off as a party matter.<sup>95</sup> Rutenberg insisted that he had carried out party instructions relayed to him by Azef, but Azef categorically denied this. Since Azef had the overwhelming trust of the party, Rutenberg spent many anxious years trying to clear his name. Eventually Azef was exposed as a police double agent, and Rutenberg was vindicated. The party committee set up to investigate Azef did not delve deeply into Gapon's murder, but it concluded that

(1) the murder of Gapon was carried out without the knowledge and consent of the central committee as a

<sup>94</sup> See the editorial comments of V. L. Burtsev appended to accounts by Rutenberg and N.N. in *Byloe*, no. 11-12, 1909, pp. 121-122.

<sup>95</sup> The Paris office of the Okhrana wrote Rachkovskii that, according to its sources, "Rutenberg is suspected. He did not take the opportunity to kill Your Highness, satisfying himself instead with the completely unnecessary, according to the views of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries, murder of Gapon out of personal vengeance, as he had stated here." Message of 23/10 May 1906, in the Okhrana Archive, xiiib(c), folder 1B, item 152: "Outgoing correspondence for 1906."

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body, (2) there are reasons to believe that those who executed this mission were deliberately misled by Azef as to the true intentions and decisions of the central committee.<sup>96</sup>

The conflict between Rutenberg and the party leadership prevented clarification of the exact circumstances surrounding the murder of Gapon. The police knew that Azef was involved and therefore only went through the motions of an investigation to protect their agent.<sup>97</sup> In fact, they were not interested in pinpointing the murderers. The authorities were satisfied that a dangerous and unpredictable adversary had been removed from the political scene. The Socialist Revolutionaries also wanted to wash their hands of the gruesome affair. Rutenberg's story of a "workers' trial" suited everybody, and few were anxious to pry deeper.

According to Rutenberg's story, he recruited a number of party members from among the workers to carry out the death sentence of the central committee. Since the workers could not believe that Father Gapon had turned traitor, Rutenberg allowed them to overhear his conversation with Gapon. This allegedly persuaded them, and they killed him. Actually Rutenberg's accomplices were members of a terrorist organization who believed they were carrying out a death sentence imposed by the party. To refer to such a situation as a "trial" reflects a peculiar concept of justice. Fur-

<sup>96</sup> *Zakliuchenie sudebno-sledstvennoi komissii po delu Azefa* (n.p., n.d.), p. 97. (There was one dissenting vote on this conclusion.) The party issued its official statement in *Znamia truda*, no. 15 (February 1909), p. 20, exonerating Rutenberg, but without accepting the responsibility for the execution of Gapon. Rutenberg's reaction is given on pp. 112-115. Following this affair Rutenberg became estranged from the party. After the Bolshevik revolution he left Russia and eventually immigrated to Palestine where he distinguished himself as a pioneer and a politician.

<sup>97</sup> Gapon left some documents for safekeeping abroad. He maintained that they would clear him and show the nature of his dealings with the government. Shortly after his death the lawyer who held the documents suddenly died and the documents vanished. See Gribovskii, "Zagadochnye dokumenty Gapona," pp. 957-961.

thermore, staging a new trial over a person already condemned to death by the party would constitute a serious breach of party discipline. In all likelihood, four party members took part. Three of them are known: Rutenberg, Derental (who also published an eyewitness account),<sup>98</sup> and Ivanov, the cab driver assigned by Azef to help Rutenberg.<sup>99</sup> The fourth may have been Gapon's former aide and by then a sworn enemy, Petrov.<sup>100</sup> But the story of the workers' trial was designed to convince the Russian workers that their former idol was a traitor who had been judged and executed by his own followers. Many decades passed, and the original story of the workers' trial remained universally accepted. Neither the police nor the party intelligentsia wanted to be linked with the murder, and no judge or jury from among the workers ever came forward to take credit for Gapon's death.

<sup>98</sup> Rutenberg's story of Gapon's death was accompanied by a corroborating eyewitness account signed "N.N." It was generally thought that this was an account by one of the "workers," but eventually it became known that it was written by A. A. Derental, a journalist, a member of the Battle Organization and close aide of Savinkov. See "Kak ubivali Gapona. Pokazaniia Derentalia. (Iz materialov V. L. Burtseva)," *Illiustrirovannaia Rossiia* (Paris), no. 5 (130), November 5, 1927, pp. 6-8.

<sup>99</sup> Rutenberg, p. 63. Also see Piskarev, "Vospominaniia rabochego o 9-m ianvare 1905 g.," p. 38. Ivanov participated in an evening of reminiscences about Bloody Sunday in 1930, admitting that he was the driver mentioned by Rutenberg, but maintaining that his role in the murder was not as significant as described by Rutenberg. See V. Berenshtam's review of D. Sverchkov, in *KL*, no. 2 (35), 1930, p. 225.

<sup>100</sup> Petrov was arrested in connection with the murder and interrogated by the police. He wrote that the "police failed to get anything out of me" ("Deviatoe ianvaria," p. 3). The late Boris I. Nikolaevsky was in jail with Petrov at the time, and he once told the present author that it was his impression from conversations with Petrov that the latter did take part in the murder. The number of "four" participants in the murder is mentioned in the press and also by agents of the Okhrana. See "Outgoing correspondence for 1905," in the Okhrana Archive, xiiib(c), folder 18, item 152. In addition, press reports constantly implicated a woman as a helper to Rutenberg; Gapon's aides, too, frequently mention a woman as do also the Okhrana reports. For example, see Gribovskii, p. 961; and Paris office of Okhrana to the director of police, 16/3 May, 1906, Okhrana Archives, xic(5), no. 137.

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Gapon's death did not produce the violent reaction feared by the authorities and the Socialist Revolutionaries. By the time of his death, Gapon had become a distant legend among the workers, and Bloody Sunday seemed far away. The workers had many organizations to lead them by 1906, and Gapon was no longer their spokesman. Besides, everything that was heard of the priest's behavior made him seem a strange, unpredictable figure, capable of the most bizarre escapades. The fantastic aura of mystery that surrounded him by 1906 was evident in the workers' dismissal of the murder story as another of Gapon's intrigues. Even when his body was found, many skeptics insisted that it was some kind of a plot perpetrated by Gapon. His funeral attracted a crowd of his most ardent supporters as well as the curious. His followers spoke of vengeance and vowed to continue his work. But time and the unfolding of events quickly left behind Father Gapon and his movement, relegating them to history, which did not treat them kindly. His former followers joined other parties and became involved in political activities, and only a few dared to remember charitably their former leader. A small amount of money was collected to erect a cross on the grave of the former Orthodox priest, who for a brief moment in history held the attention of the world as he led the multitudes of workers to fall on their knees before their "little father" in front of the Winter Palace.<sup>101</sup> Twelve years later the victims of Bloody Sunday and their descendants reached their destination, not to fall on their knees but to sweep it clean. By then the workers followed new leaders, and the name of the former priest was strangely out of place in the ensuing drama. In the new workers' state there was no place for the mercurial Orthodox priest who was the symbol of the rebellion in the turbulent year of 1905.

<sup>101</sup> Iuvachev, "Mogila Gapon," p. 208.



# Appendix I. The Statutes of the Assembly

The original is signed:

"APPROVED"

For the Minister of the Interior,  
Assistant Minister Senator P. Durnovo

February 15, 1904

Verified: For the Director,  
Vice-Director I. Biunting

## The Statutes of the "Assembly" of the Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg

### I. GOALS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Paragraph 1. The "Assembly" of the Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg is established (a) for the purpose of temperate and sensible utilization of leisure time by the members of the Assembly that would be truly beneficial to them in spiritual, moral, and material respects; (b) to promote and strengthen Russian national consciousness among the member workers; (c) to develop and foster among them a sensible outlook on their obligations and their rights; and finally (d) to provide an opportunity for members to exercise their own independent, voluntary activity toward the improvement of their lives and conditions of work.

### II. MEANS OF ATTAINMENT OF THESE GOALS

Paragraph 2. The following are the means for the attainment of stated purposes: (a) absolute prohibition of gambling and the use of alcoholic beverages, as well as the presence of intoxicated members or their guests, on the premises of the "Assembly"; (b) acquisition of useful edi-

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tions of Russian periodical press, establishment of a library and a reading room; formation of church and secular choirs as well as musical instrumental groups from among the members, and organization of concerts, family, literary and vocal-singing soirees in the permanent premises of the "Assembly" and in rented halls; (c) conduct of weekly "circles" and "meetings of members" for prudent discussion of their general needs and self-education; (d) promotion of religious-moral discussions, and also meetings of readings with discussions; (e) the organization, with prior authorization, of lectures on general educational subjects, especially on Russian heritage, and particularly on labor subjects that would explain to the workers their legal status and legal means that are available to them in assisting them to emerge from ignorance and squalor into the light; (f) the establishment of a mutual-aid fund for cases of sickness, unemployment, and special needs of the members; (g) the establishment, on the basis of specially formulated regulations that are to be submitted for approval to the Ministry of the Interior, of a funeral fund, as well as the establishment, with proper authorization in each case, of various other measures that would help in raising the workers' wages and render them assistance during times of difficulties; (h) the establishment of a tearoom (with a buffet) on the premises of the Assembly and, with the growth of the Assembly, the opening of a cooperative consumer store; (i) voluntary performance of their duties by the officials of the Assembly without compensation for one year from the date of approval of this statute.

*Note 1.* The establishment of the library and reading room is to be governed by the rules defined in the appendix to Article 175 of the *Code on Censorship and Press*, 1890 edition, and in compliance with the regulations concerning the use and administration of free reading rooms issued by the Ministry of the Interior on May 15, 1890. The library and the reading

room must be supervised and controlled by responsible individuals approved by the City Governor. The City Governor of St. Petersburg has the right to inspect the library and the reading room.

*Note 2.* The Representative of the Assembly must notify the City Governor, or individuals appointed by the City Governor, of planned soirees, discussions, readings and lectures, and supply the names of individuals conducting them.

*Note 3.* No money can be drawn out from the capital of the mutual-aid fund during strikes.

*Note 4.* The establishment of a cooperative consumer store will depend upon approval by the proper authorities of the special statute to be submitted for that purpose.

*Note 5.* The tearoom of the Assembly will open at 6:30 P.M. during workdays, and at 2:00 P.M. on holidays.

### III. THE INCOME OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS DISBURSEMENT

Paragraph 3. The income of the Assembly is derived from the following sources: (a) monthly dues of the active and supporting members; (b) income from tearooms, consumer stores, and other similar undertakings; (c) income from family and literary-vocal soirees, concerts, lectures, etc., organized on the premises of the Assembly or in rented halls; (d) voluntary donations to the Assembly, and from other income that might develop.

*Note.* Each presentation of public literary-vocal soirees, concerts, readings, and lectures must be properly authorized and be conducted in accordance with specific rules and official instructions.

Paragraph 4. Obligatory initiation fee for active membership of the First Category is one ruble, with monthly dues

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of 50 kopecks; for active membership in the Second Category the initiation fee is 50 kopecks, with monthly dues of 25 kopecks.

*Note 1.* Participants in church and secular choirs of the Assembly and in musical circles, as well as sustaining members, may have their monthly dues suspended by the Representative of the Assembly.

*Note 2.* Monthly dues can be suspended for unemployed members for the duration of their unemployment by the Governing Board.

Paragraph 5. Entrance fees to family and literary-vocal soirees, concerts, lectures, etc., presented by the Assembly in its own quarters and for its members cannot exceed 15 kopecks; to events staged in rented halls open to all workers of St. Petersburg, it must not exceed 50 kopecks, including donations.

*Note.* The Representative of the Assembly, members of the Governing Board and officials of the events are exempted from the fees described in Paragraph 5.

Paragraph 6. Voluntary contributions designated for specific purposes must be used in accordance with the wishes of the donors provided these purposes do not violate the aims of the Assembly.

Paragraph 7. The capital fund of the Assembly is to be established by (a) deduction of 50 percent of monthly membership dues, and (b) by allocation of 25 percent of net profit from tearooms, consumer stores, and other profit-making undertakings of the Assembly to that purpose.

Paragraph 8. The basic capital to remain inviolable until the sum of 500 rubles is accumulated. Only after the basic capital has reached this sum can the General Meeting of the regular members approve expenditures up to two-thirds of

the sum in excess of 500 rubles and for purposes deemed to be of substantial benefit to the common cause.

Paragraph 9. The operating capital used to expand and improve the affairs of the Assembly is to be drawn from the allocation of 25 percent of the monthly dues to that purpose and from all other income received by the treasury of the Assembly.

Paragraph 10. The mutual-aid fund of the Assembly is formed from: (a) allocation of 25 percent of monthly dues; (b) voluntary contributions; and (c) allocation of 25 percent of net profit from various undertakings of the Assembly.

*Note 1.* Regular members are entitled to monetary assistance, either in form of an outright grant or a loan, after active membership of at least six months. The conditions of the assistance as well as its specific sum are to be approved by the General Meeting of regular members.

*Note 2.* The records of the mutual-aid fund are to be forwarded to the City Governor of St. Petersburg.

Paragraph 11. The allocation of the fund of the Assembly in a manner prescribed in paragraphs 7, 8, 9, and 10 must be undertaken by the Governing Board of the Assembly not later than the tenth day of each month.

Paragraph 12. In case the expenditures for renting of the premises, operation of the tearoom, etc., exceed the income, then the members of the Circle of Responsible Individuals are obligated to make up the difference from their own pockets.

Paragraph 13. The treasury of the Assembly can retain not more than 50 rubles on hand for operating expenses. The rest of the funds not earmarked for immediate disburse-

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ment must be deposited by the Governing Board with the State Savings Bank, or, upon the decision of the General Meeting of regular members, be converted to state and state guaranteed interest-bearing bonds and be deposited for safekeeping in the State Bank.

### IV. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSEMBLY: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Paragraph 14. The Assembly has its own Representative and is composed of the Circle of Responsible Individuals and an unrestricted number of (a) regular members; (b) sustaining members; and (c) honorary members.

*Note.* Membership is closed to minors and individuals restricted in their rights by the courts or individuals who are under investigation or on trial for crimes that would result in such restrictions of rights.

Paragraph 15. The Representative of the Assembly is elected initially by the Circle of Responsible Individuals from among clerical or secular intelligentsia for a period of three years.

Paragraph 16. The Representative of the Assembly is considered to be empowered to deal with all matters pertaining to the Assembly. Therefore all correspondence and all contacts of the Assembly with private, public, and official institutions or individuals is carried out in the name of the Representative, and must be signed by him or the Chairman of the Governing Board acting for him. This correspondence is to be co-signed by either the Secretary or the Treasurer of the Assembly. The Representative prepares the agenda for the meetings of the Governing Board. The Representative is the principal responsible individual for the Assembly before the Government. The City Governor must approve the election of the Representative before the latter can assume his office.

*Note.* If a person of ecclesiastical rank is elected as the Representative of the Assembly he must obtain the permission and blessing of his highest ecclesiastical authority as well as the approval of the City Governor before assuming his office.

Paragraph 17. Adult, serious, and honest workers, of Russian ancestry, who are employed in mechanical plants, factories, and shops in St. Petersburg and its environs, who have signed these proposed statutes, are recognized as the founding members of the Assembly. Together with the Representative of the Assembly they constitute the "Circle of Individuals Responsible to the Government" for the sensible and lawful direction of the Assembly's activities.

Paragraph 18. The Circle of Responsible Individuals with the permission of the Representative and concurrence of all members of the Circle can increase its membership from among adult, serious, honest regular members of the Assembly who agree in writing to share in the financial obligations that might accrue in renting of the premises of the Assembly.

*Note 1.* With permission of the Representative of the Assembly and a written guarantee of two members of the Responsible Circle, any factory-mill workers of Russian descent and Christian faith, as well as any Russian woman of sober and moral character employed in a factory, can be admitted into the Circle.

*Note 2.* If proof of impropriety and behavior harmful to the cause of workers is presented to the plenary meeting of the Responsible Circle against one of its members, the Representative of the Assembly on the recommendation of the Circle can remove the said individual from the Responsible Circle after two warnings. In case the individual is accused of illegal transgressions, he can be removed without prior warnings.

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Paragraph 19. Aside from the Circle of Responsible Individuals, regular membership is open to workers of both sexes, but only of Russian descent and Christian faith, who are working in mechanical plants, shops, and factories in St. Petersburg. Regular members are admitted to membership by the Governing Board.

*Note 1.* Employees and foremen (*mastera*) of the said plants, shops, and factories cannot be admitted as regular members. Assistant foremen and so-called "elders" in shops can be admitted as regular members.

*Note 2.* As a special exception, workers who are not of Russian descent but are Christians and Russian subjects can be admitted into regular membership.

Paragraph 20. Individuals wishing to become regular members of the Assembly must submit a written application to the Governing Board specifying their professional status and including a recommendation-guarantee of two regular members. The Governing Board sends the information on new members to the Representative of the Assembly and reports their admission to the next General Meeting.

Paragraph 21. Every new regular member is issued a receipt for the initiation fee and a copy of this statute. The receipt is the proof of regular membership.

*Note.* Regular members of the Assembly lose their membership when they cease to be workers. Members who become employees or foremen automatically forfeit their regular membership.

Paragraph 22. Sustaining membership in the Assembly is open to Christians of both sexes who sympathize with the aims of the Assembly and who contribute at least 5 rubles annually. Individuals making a single contribution of 100 rubles become lifetime sustaining members.



*Note.* Sustaining membership is granted by the Governing Board and reported to the General Meeting.

Paragraph 23. Honorary membership is open to persons of both sexes who have made sizeable contributions to the needs of the Assembly or have rendered it important services. Honorary memberships are proposed by the Governing Board and elected by the vote of the General Meeting.

*Note.* Honorary and sustaining members are not eligible to receive assistance from the mutual-aid funds. In addition, sustaining members cannot be elected to any offices in the Assembly and do not possess the right to vote at General Meetings, but can attend (except for foremen) General Meetings as guests with permission of the Representative of the Assembly.

Paragraph 24. The regular members of the Assembly are obligated to pay initiation fees and monthly dues.

*Note 1.* Dues are to be paid voluntarily by individual members and will not be automatically deducted from wages.

*Note 2.* Payment of monthly dues commences from the month the applicant is approved for membership by the Governing Board.

*Note 3.* Monthly dues can be paid in advance for periods longer than one month.

Paragraph 25. A regular member who did not pay membership dues for three months, without a reason accepted as valid by the Governing Board, is considered to have withdrawn from the Assembly.

*Note 1.* Regular members who have withdrawn from the Assembly for any reason can be readmitted by the Governing Board and approval of the Representative

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of the Assembly into membership without payment of the initiation fees.

*Note 2.* Regular members who have withdrawn from the Assembly and members expelled from the Assembly by the decision of the General Meeting cannot request a refund of their initiation fees and monthly dues.

Paragraph 26. *The rights of regular members of the Assembly:* Every regular member of the Assembly has the right to: (a) free use of the library; (b) vote at General Meetings; (c) state his views to the Governing Board about any matter he considers beneficial to the attainment of the goals of the Assembly; (d) demand assistance during periods of difficulties, after the expiration of a six-months period following the approval of this statute and payment of initiation and monthly dues for the same period, from the mutual-aid fund in accordance with the instructions of the General Meeting. The members of the Responsible Circle have the right to be elected to the Governing Board and other responsible positions in the Assembly.

*Note.* Statements addressed to the Governing Board, as well as complaints against it, must be submitted in writing to the Representative of the Assembly.

Paragraph 27. *The responsibilities of regular members:* Every regular member, besides payment of initiation fee and monthly dues, is under the obligation: (a) to obey strictly the provisions of this statute; (b) to inform the Governing Board of any job vacancy that is known to him that could be filled by members of the Assembly; (c) not to decline without sufficient reason to serve in an elective office or fulfill other duties required of him without monetary compensation; (d) to obey all decisions voted by the General Meeting and the Governing Board; (e) to respect all instructions of duly appointed officials executing their appointed tasks; (f) to supply the Governing Board information it might request; (g) to attend meetings; and finally

(h) to strive to strengthen and stimulate among the workers Russian national consciousness, and develop among his comrades the idea of workers' solidarity and mutual assistance. In addition to the above, the members of the Responsible Circle (a) are morally responsible before the rest of the members for honest conduct of the Assembly's affairs; (b) mutually guarantee the payment of rent in writing when the Assembly undertakes to conclude leasing contracts for its premises.

Paragraph 28. For persistent violation of the statute and behavior deemed harmful to the Assembly, regular members, not members of the Responsible Circle, can be expelled from the Assembly by a decision of the General Meeting and permission of the Representative of the Assembly.

#### V. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY GATHERINGS OF WORKERS

Paragraph 29. Saturday gatherings, so-called "circle meetings," take place every Saturday at 8:30 P.M. They must be attended by members of the Governing Board and all other officers of the Assembly as well, as much as possible, by all members of the Responsible Circle.

Paragraph 30. The agenda of the circle meetings must include: (a) report of the chairman of the previous Sunday general gathering; (b) reports of various officials of the Assembly on the week's activities; (c) preparation of the agenda for the future Sunday general gathering; and (d) composition of the written agenda or notice of the Sunday gathering.

*Note 1.* With permission of the Representative of the Assembly, Saturday gatherings will take up questions and reports of all members of the circle concerning the life, needs, and legal status of workers and other matters pertaining to the Assembly.

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*Note 2.* The announcement of the agenda for the Sunday general gathering is to be posted in advance by the Secretary of the Assembly in a prominent place.

Paragraph 31. Protocol (minutes) of the gatherings is compiled by the secretary elected by the circle for a period of three months.

Paragraph 32. General Sunday gatherings of factory-mill workers are to take place every Sunday at 3:00 P.M.

Paragraph 33. A chairman and a secretary who conduct Sunday gatherings are elected by the General Meeting of regular members for a period of three months from among the members of the Responsible Circle.

*Note 1.* The chairman must be a serious and capable individual possessing patience to listen to workers who wish to be heard, and capable of directing discussions and summarizing them at their conclusion.

*Note 2.* The secretary compiles protocols briefly noting the essentials of the discussions and is responsible for seeing that the protocols are properly signed.

Paragraph 34. Every worker who is entitled to attend the gatherings has a right to express his views on the subjects specified in the agenda, and to participate in the discussions.

*Note 1.* With permission of the Representative of the Assembly, articles and poetry approved by censorship can be read at gatherings.

*Note 2.* Sunday gatherings can be attended by, in addition to regular and sustaining members, any sober worker who has paid a special fee of 20 kopecks.

*Note 3.* Sustaining members from among the foremen cannot attend Saturday and Sunday gatherings except by permission of the Representative of the Assembly.

VI. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Paragraph 35. The direct administration of the affairs of the Assembly is vested in the Governing Board of the Assembly.

Paragraph 36. The Governing Board is composed of fifteen members and five candidates elected by the General Meeting for a period of three months from among the regular members of the Circle of Responsible Individuals.

*Note 1.* Women cannot be elected to the Governing Board.

*Note 2.* The Governing Board continues in office until the newly elected Governing Board can assume its responsibilities.

Paragraph 37. The Governing Board, in consultation with the Representative of the Assembly, elects from among its members the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, administrator of the tearoom, librarian, cashier, and other responsible officials. The list of elected officers and officials is submitted to the City Governor who must approve the elections before they can assume their offices.

Paragraph 38. The Chairman, with the approval of the Representative of the Assembly, designates the date and time for meetings of the Governing Board, which must be held at least once a week.

*Note.* The members of the Board must attend all meetings of the Board. If a member of the Board for some reason cannot attend a meeting he must notify the Chairman as soon as possible so that a candidate member can take his place. The consequences of missing meetings of the Board will be determined in measures to be approved by the General Meeting.

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Paragraph 39. The majority of the Board, including candidates, is required for a quorum for validation of its decisions.

*Note 1.* The business of the Board is decided by a simple majority, with the Chairman voting in case of a tie.

*Note 2.* Meetings of the Board can be attended by its direct overseer—the Representative of the Assembly—and members of the Audit (*revizionnaia*) Committee.

Paragraph 40. The Governing Board is charged with the following responsibilities: (a) admission of regular and sustaining members; (b) receipt of all dues and other funds deposited in the treasury of the Assembly; (c) maintenance of account books, journals of proceedings, and writing of reports; (d) assistance to members seeking employment; (e) collection of information on members requesting assistance; (f) allocation of various forms of assistance; (g) convocation, with the approval of the Representative of the Assembly, of regular and special meetings; (h) safekeeping of funds, purchase of interest-bearing notes, and receipt of interest due: deposit and withdrawal of money and notes with the State Bank. All this to be done with the approval of the Representative of the Assembly and in conformity with instructions issued by General Meetings.

*Note.* All expenditures of the Assembly are to be made on the basis of the budget approved by the General Meetings.

Paragraph 41. The members of the Governing Board are personally liable for financial losses suffered as a result of their actions which may be contrary to the provisions of this statute and instructions of the General Meetings. The Governing Board or its members can be dismissed from their offices by the Representative of the Assembly upon the decision of the General Meeting.

*Note.* A book for complaints is maintained on the premises of the Assembly. Every regular member can demand to see the book and to record his complaints in it. The Governing Board examines the complaints at its next meeting and makes appropriate replies to them. Violation of these regulations can be appealed to the General Meeting of regular members through the Representative of the Assembly.

Paragraph 42. The General Meeting elects a five-man Audit Committee for a three-month term to maintain constant supervision over finances, property, and books of the Assembly. The members of the Committee must be regular members, and two of them must be members of the Responsible Circle, but not members of the Governing Board.

Paragraph 43. The Audit Committee must conduct a monthly audit of the affairs of the Assembly and submit a written report at the start of each month to the General Meeting through the Representative of the Assembly. A copy of the audit is to be displayed in a conspicuous place on the premises of the Assembly.

*Note.* An audit of the dealings and funds of the Assembly can be ordered by the City Governor of St. Petersburg at any time, to be conducted by individuals designated by him.

Paragraph 44. Supervision and control of activity on the premises of the Assembly is exercised by three members (*dezturnye*) elected for a three-week period. One member of this committee must be a member of the Responsible Circle and the other two regular members of the Assembly.

*Note.* Alternates are elected for all members of this committee.

Paragraph 45. Supervisory-control personnel on duty are required (a) to be cordial and friendly with the sober vis-

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itors to the Assembly; (b) to be guardians of order and propriety on the premises of the Assembly; (c) to enforce strictly the prohibition on the premises of the Assembly against consumption of alcohol, gambling, and presence of individuals under the influence of alcohol; (d) to see that people do not gather in groups for discussions in any other than designated locations; (e) to check quality, portions, and price of food sold on the premises; to check book entries for proper recording of delivered supplies and their daily consumption; (f) to supervise cleanliness of the premises, kitchen utensils, and china, as well as service personnel; (g) to record justifiable complaints of fellow workers and all observed shortcomings; (h) to control admission of visitors to the Assembly; (i) in addition, the official on duty can serve as a cashier for issuance of coupon stamps and receipt of payments for tea and food consumed on the premises.

*Note 1.* Supervisory-control personnel must be on duty during all hours of operation of the facilities of the Assembly. If a member for some reason cannot be present, he must give prior notice so that he can be replaced by an alternate.

*Note 2.* Performance of supervisory-control personnel is subject to review by their comrades in circle meetings.

Paragraph 46. The specific instructions for performance of duties in record keeping, rights and responsibilities of the members and candidates of the Governing Board, members of the Audit Committee and supervisory-control personnel are spelled out in the instructions approved by the General Meeting.

## THE GENERAL MEETINGS

Paragraph 47. Normally General Meetings are convened by the Governing Board with the approval of the Representa-



tive of the Assembly at least four times a year. One of them is to be considered the "annual meeting" and is convened at a date close to February 19 of each year. The other meetings are designated "special."

Paragraph 48. All regular members of the Assembly participate in the General Meetings which are closed to the public.

*Note 1.* The City Governor may assign members of the police to be present at General Meetings.

*Note 2.* Every member has one vote at General Meetings, and this vote cannot be exercised by proxy.

Paragraph 49. If the General Meetings cannot be accommodated by the available premises, regular members can elect delegates to represent them (preferably delegates should represent members from the same plant or shop). For this purpose, regular members, with permission of the management, should gather at their places of employment to elect their representatives. Credentials of delegates can be certified by presentation of receipts (membership cards) of those they represent.

Paragraph 50. Members are to be notified by the Governing Board of the date, time, place, and agenda of the General Meeting. The Governing Board through the Representative of the Assembly notifies the City Governor of St. Petersburg of the proposed meeting.

*Note.* The General Meetings, annual or special, can deal only with matters specified in the agenda and that are directly connected to activities authorized by specific provisions of this statute, and only with those matters on agenda communicated to the City Governor.

Paragraph 51. Special Meetings are convened by the Representative of the Assembly in cases requiring immediate

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attention which could not be handled by the Governing Board.

Paragraph 52. The quorum for General Meetings, both annual and special, shall constitute the presence of not less than one-half of those eligible to participate. A quorum of two-thirds of all members of the Assembly is required to decide on the amendments or alterations of this statute, acquisition of real property, establishment of enterprises enumerated in Paragraph 2, expulsion of regular members, election of honorary members, removal of members of the Governing Board, closure of the Assembly and the liquidation of its property.

*Note.* If a General Meeting lacks a quorum, then in not less than a week, and not longer than a month, membership will be notified that a new meeting will be held with the requirements for a quorum suspended. In such cases, only the matters specified on the agenda for the previous meeting can be discussed and no new matters can be brought up.

Paragraph 53. The decisions of the General Meeting are reached through a simple majority of those present either in an open or secret ballot in accordance with the wishes of the General Meeting. Elections of the Governing Board and the Audit Committee are conducted by secret ballot.

General Meetings convened to deal with matters enumerated in Paragraph 52 require approval of two-thirds of members present. All members are obliged to accept the decision of the General Meeting.

*Note.* All instructions to the officials of the Assembly voted by the General Meeting must be submitted for approval to the City Governor through the Representative of the Assembly. In case the City Governor finds them objectionable they are returned with the stated objections for reconsideration by the General Meeting.

Paragraph 54. The General Meeting is opened by the Representative of the Assembly or a person designated by him. The chairman and the recording secretary of the General Meeting are elected by the General Meeting from among its members not holding an official position in the Assembly.

Paragraph 55. The General Meeting deals with the following matters: (a) elects in the future the Representative of the Assembly; (b) elects members and candidates of the Governing Board, and members of the Audit Committee; (c) examines and approves the annual report of the Governing Board and the statement on this report by the Representative of the Assembly; (d) approves annual budgets; considers and votes on the proposals submitted by the Representative of the Assembly, Governing Board, Audit Committee, and individual members, provided such proposals are sponsored by at least 10 percent of the regular members and have been submitted for consideration at least two weeks before the General Meeting through the Representative of the Assembly; (e) elects honorary members; (f) approves necessary means to attain the aims of the Assembly; (g) approves instructions to the Governing Board, Audit Committee, and others; (h) deliberates and approves amendments to this statute; (i) expels regular members from the Assembly; (j) supervises adherence to this statute; (k) approves acquisition of real property; (l) examines complaints against the Governing Board; (m) removes members of the Governing Board; (n) decides on the termination of the activity of the Assembly and disposal of its property.

*Note.* The General Meeting may constitute special committees to deal with specific matters.

Paragraph 56. Two copies of the approved annual report, together with a short summary highlighting its important points, are submitted to the City Governor of St. Petersburg through the Representative of the Assembly. The General Meeting, subject to the approval of the City Governor, may

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permit publication of annual reports in the press or in the form of a separate pamphlet.

### VII. GENERAL REGULATIONS

Paragraph 57. The Assembly exists under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior on the authority of Articles 444 and 445 of the Public Order Code (*Ustav obshchestvennogo prizreniia*), vol. XIII of the Law Code (*Svod zakonov*), 1892 edition.

Paragraph 58. The Assembly has a seal with its name embossed on it.

Paragraph 59. The Assembly has a right to acquire necessary real property in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

Paragraph 60. Amendments to this statute approved by two-thirds of the membership present at a General Meeting are submitted by the Representative of the Assembly for approval by the Government in accordance with the established procedures.

### VIII. TERMINATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Paragraph 61. Membership of the Assembly can terminate the activity of the Assembly in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 52 of this statute. The Assembly would then be considered closed and its capital liquidated in accordance with the instructions of the General Meeting and approval of the City Governor.

Paragraph 62. If for any reason the City Governor of St. Petersburg finds it necessary to terminate the activity of the Assembly he will submit his request to the Ministry of the Interior which can order closure of the Assembly at any time. This provision does not infringe on the authority of

the City Governor under Articles 321 and 883 of the *Code on Public Provincial Organizations*, 1892 edition, to order closure of any club or organization deemed harmful to the State, public order, or morality.

Paragraph 64 [sic]. Notice of closure of the Assembly is to be published in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* and in the *Vedomosti S.-Peterburgskogo gradonachal'stva* and transmitted to the Ministry of the Interior by the City Governor of St. Petersburg.

Signed: For the Director, Vice-Director N. Biunting

Witnessed by: For the Head of the Section, N. Grave

Correct: For the Recording Desk, I. Matveev

## Appendix II. The Petition of January 9

### A Most Humble and Loyal Address

of the Workers of St. Petersburg Intended for Presentation  
to HIS MAJESTY on Sunday at two o'clock on the Winter  
Palace Square

SIRE:

We, the workers *and inhabitants* of St. Petersburg, of *various estates*, our wives, our children, and our aged, helpless parents, come to Thee, O SIRE, to seek justice and protection. We are impoverished; we are oppressed, overburdened with excessive toil, contemptuously treated. We are not even recognized as human beings, but are treated like slaves who must suffer their bitter fate in silence and without complaint. And we have suffered, but even so we are being further (and further) pushed into the slough of poverty, arbitrariness, and ignorance. We are suffocating in despotism and lawlessness. O SIRE, we have no strength left, and our endurance is at an end. We have reached that frightful moment when death is better than the prolongation of our unbearable sufferings.

Hence, we stopped work and told our employers that we will not resume work until our demands are fulfilled. We did not ask much; we sought only that without which there is no life for us but hard labor and eternal suffering. Our first request was that our employers agree to discuss our needs with us. But (even) this we were refused. We were prohibited even from speaking of our needs, since no such right is given us by law. The following requests were also deemed to be outside of the law: the reduction of the work-day to eight hours; our mutual participation in determining the rates for our work and in the settlement of grievances that might arise between us and the lower managerial staff;

to raise the minimum daily wages for unskilled workers, and for women as well, to one ruble; to abolish overtime work; to give our sick better medical attention without insults; and to arrange our workshops so that we might work there without encountering death from murderous drafts, rain, and snow.

According to our employers *and managers*, our demands turned out to be illegal, our every request a crime, and our desire to improve our conditions an insolence, insulting to *them* (our masters). O SIRE, (there are more than 300,000 of us) *we are many thousands* here, but we are human beings in appearance only, for we, *with the rest of the Russian people*, do not possess a single human right, not even the right to speak, think, gather, discuss our needs and take steps to improve our conditions. *We are enslaved, enslaved under the patronage and with the aid of Thy officials.* Anyone of us who dares to raise his voice in defense of the working class *and the people* is thrown into jail or exiled. Kindheartedness is punished as a crime. To feel sorry for a (worker as a) downtrodden, maltreated human being bereft of his rights is to commit a heinous crime! *The workers and the peasants are delivered into the hands of the bureaucratic administration, comprised of embezzlers of public funds and robbers, who not only care nothing for the needs of the people, but flagrantly abuse them. The bureaucratic administration brought the country to the brink of ruin, involved her in a humiliating war, and is leading Russia closer and closer to disaster. We, the workers and people, have no voice whatsoever in the spending of huge sums collected from us in taxes. We do not even know how the money, collected from the impoverished people, is spent. The people are deprived of the opportunity to express their wishes and demands, to participate in the establishment of taxes and public spending. The workers are deprived of the opportunity to organize into unions in order to defend their interests.*

O SIRE, is this in accordance with God's laws, by the grace of which Thou reignest? Is it possible to live under such

laws? Would it not be preferable for all of us, the toiling people of Russia, to die? Let the capitalists-*exploiters of the working class* and officials, the embezzlers and plunderers of the Russian people, live and enjoy their lives.

These are the prospects that are before us, SIRE, and the reasons that brought us to the walls of Thy palace. Here we seek the final salvation. Do not turn Thy help away from Thy people. Lead them out from the mire of lawlessness, poverty, and ignorance. Allow them to determine their own future; deliver them from the intolerable oppression of the officialdom. Raze the wall that separates Thee from Thy people and rule the country with them. Thou reignest in order to bring happiness to Thy people, but this happiness is torn out of our hands by Thy officials, and there is nothing left for us but grief and humiliation. ([end of paragraph]) Consider our demands attentively and without anger, for they are uttered not in malice but for the good, ours as well as Thine, O SIRE. We speak not in insolence, but from the realization of the necessity to find a way out of a situation intolerable to us all. Russia is too vast, and her needs are too great and manifold to be dealt with exclusively by the bureaucrats. *Popular representation is essential*; it is essential that the people help themselves *and govern themselves*. Truly, only they know their *real* needs. Refuse not their help, accept it (!) and command representatives of the Russian land, of all her classes, of all her estates, *as well as representatives of the workers*, to gather without delay. Let these include a capitalist, worker, official, priest, doctor, teacher—let everyone, whoever he may be, elect his representative. Let everyone be free and equal in his choice, and for this purpose let the elections to the constituent assembly be conducted under conditions of universal (direct), secret, and equal suffrage.

This is our principal request, upon which everything else depends. This is the main and the only balm for our (ailing) wounds, without which they will continue to fester and will *soon* bring us death.



But a single measure cannot heal (all) our wounds. Others are needed, and we have come to Thee, SIRE, openly and directly as to the father, to tell Thee, *in the name of the entire toiling class of Russia*, that the following are essential:

I. Measures to eliminate the ignorance of and arbitrariness toward the Russian people.

1. The immediate release and return of those who suffered for their political and religious convictions, for strikes and peasant disorders.\*
2. *An immediate proclamation of freedom and inviolability of the person, freedom of speech, press, association, and worship.*
3. Free universal and compulsory public education, financed by the State.
4. Responsibility of the ministers before the people and guarantees that the government will act according to law.
5. Equality of all before the law without any exceptions.
6. *Separation of the church from the state.*

II. Measures to eliminate the poverty of the people.

1. Abolition of indirect taxation and the introduction of a progressive income tax.
2. Abolition of the land redemption payments, cheap credit, and the gradual transfer of the land to the people.
3. *Contracts for orders of the war and naval departments are to be made in Russia and not abroad.*
4. *Termination of the war in accordance with the will of the people.*

\* In earlier version Paragraph 1 was last and read: "Immediate release of those who suffered for convictions."

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### III. Measures to eliminate the oppression of labor by capital.

1. *Abolition of the system of factory inspectors.*
2. *Establishment in factories and plants of permanent elected worker committees, which are to participate with management in the consideration of worker grievances. Workers must not to be discharged without the consent of these committees.*<sup>1</sup>
3. *Freedom of cooperative associations and professional worker unions is to be allowed without delay.*
4. *An eight-hour workday and strict regulation of overtime work.*
5. *Freedom of the struggle for labor against capital is to be allowed without delay.*
6. *Immediate establishment of normal wage rates.*<sup>2</sup>
7. *Participation of representatives of the (workers) working classes in the drafting of a bill for state insurance of workers is indispensable, and is to be put into effect without delay.*

Here, O SIRE, are our principal needs which we have come to lay before Thee: (!) *only with their fulfillment can our Motherland be emancipated from slavery and poverty, only then can she prosper, and only then can the workers unite in order to defend their interests against the brazen exploitation of the capitalists and the plundering, stifling bureaucratic administration.*

Issue Thy orders and swear to fulfill them, and Thou wilt make Russia happy and glorious, and Thy name will forever be engraved in our hearts and in the hearts of all our descendants. But if Thou withholdest Thy command and failest to respond to our supplications, we will die here on this square before Thy palace. There is no place for us to go, nor is there any reason for us to go any further. (!)

<sup>1</sup> In place of Paragraphs 1 and 2, earlier version read, "Protection of labor by law."

<sup>2</sup> Was listed last.

There are two paths before us: one to freedom and happiness, the other into the grave. . . . (SIRE, show us either of them and we will follow it without a word, even if it leads us to death.) Let our lives be a sacrifice for suffering Russia. We do not regret this sacrifice, but offer it gladly. (!)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There are essentially two basic versions of the petition that received wide circulation at the time. The final version was ready in the evening of January 7. In the text given here the sections in italics were added in the final redaction, while words in parentheses were either deleted or replaced.

The original signed by Gapon is in the State Museum of the Revolution in Moscow. Copy of the petition in Witte Papers, Columbia University Russian Archive, No. 22.8.32, Folder 2. For the comparative version of the final text and the text that appeared in Lenin's *Vpered*, see 1905, document 21, pp. 28-31. For comparison of various redactions of the petition, see Shilov, "K dokumental'noi istorii 'petitsii.' "

The copies of the petition sent to various officials were designated as "A Most Humble and Loyal Address." See copy in Witte papers, Columbia Russian Archive.



## Bibliography

This study has relied chiefly on an abundance of published primary and secondary sources. Most such materials, however, were published largely to advance a tendentious point of view. The principal aim of the present work has been to reexamine and reevaluate existing material in order to provide a more balanced and complex account than has appeared so far of the developments that surround the names of Father Gapon and Bloody Sunday.

The Inter-University Project on the History of the Menshevik Movement offered a unique opportunity for me to discuss some of my findings with persons who had been intimately connected with the events. Among them, Rafael A. Abramovich, who was the representative of the Jewish Bund in St. Petersburg at the time, Boris I. Nikolaevsky, and Lydia O. Dan were very helpful with their comments, criticism, information, and advice. Solomon M. Schwarz provided invaluable advice and information, particularly in interviews with one of the participants in the events, Ludwig O. Gerb (sometimes known as Gerby). Copies of the interviews are on file with the Menshevik Project.

The directors of the Russian Archive at Columbia University in New York generously made possible an examination of its holdings, particularly the Witte papers, which contained material on the relationship of Witte with Father Gapon. The Hoover Institution opened to me its archives of the Okhrana service abroad and the collection of B. I. Nikolaevsky, both of which yielded interesting and valuable information. I was also given access to the material on Gapon in the files of the Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement preserved in the name of Franz Kurski in New York.

One of the principal sources of information for this work was the daily and periodical press, both Russian and for-

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eign. The foreign press was particularly useful, since censorship prevented Russian papers from devoting the attention and space to events in Russia that were given them abroad. *The Times* of London provided extensive coverage of events in Russia, often containing information that was not available elsewhere, as did the *Daily Telegraph* of London and the *Manchester Guardian*. The American papers were also very helpful, particularly the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune*, and the *New York Herald*.

The French papers tended frequently to exaggerate and sensationalize the news from Russia. *L'Humanité* had a special correspondent in St. Petersburg, Etienne Avenard, whose collection of dispatches from Russia were later published in book form. The views of the German press were recently published in a convenient collection edited by Leo Stern, in the series *Archivalische Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. II, books 3-6: *Die russische Revolution von 1905-1907 im Spiegel der deutsche Presse*, Berlin: Rutten and Loening, 1961.

Russian newspapers have been utilized extensively. The émigré opposition papers, the organ of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries—*Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, the Menshevik *Iskra*, Lenin's *Vpered*, the Liberationalist *Osvobozhdenie*, and the Bund's *Poslednie izvestiia* contain a wealth of information. The official governmental paper, *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, published official releases and statements.

The events and developments discussed here found a lively reflection in the Russian press, but censorship often laid its heavy hand on the extent of the coverage. Different papers became preoccupied with certain aspects of the developments, then shifted their interest to something else. Thus some are important for certain topics and for certain periods of time, and others for others. The paper *Rus'* (later *Molva* and *XX vek*) provided extensive coverage of the developments in the branches of the Assembly, having close contacts with Gapon and his aides. So did *Russkaia gazeta*, whose editor, Stroev, was closely linked with the Assembly's leadership.

Particularly useful as sources of information were the prerevolutionary papers *Novoe vremia*, *S.-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, *Russkie vedomosti*, *Rech'*, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, and *Pravo*. An important source of information on the Assembly is the paper published between 1906 and 1908 by M. Ushakov, *Rabochaia gazeta*.

Following the October revolution, the anniversary of Bloody Sunday became a national holiday, with all papers giving prominent space to it. On that day papers and periodicals published excerpts from memoirs of those connected with the events and brief reminiscences of various workers who took part in the processions of January 9. "Evenings" were organized at which participants gave accounts of their experiences. Some of these recollections are brief and superficial, others are significant. Until the death of Lenin in 1924, which almost coincided with the anniversary date of Bloody Sunday, all major papers devoted some space to the event. After 1924, only on important anniversaries (twenty, twenty-five, and fifty years) was there extensive coverage, and sometimes entire issues of journals were devoted to Bloody Sunday. Among the papers for that period, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were checked, and particularly the Leningrad papers, of which *Leningradskaia pravda* (*Petrogradskaia pravda*) is the most important. The earlier the date and the more significant the anniversary, the more material there is likely to be in the Soviet periodical press. The fiftieth anniversary in 1955 produced a great volume of writing on the revolution of 1905. The newspaper articles cited in the present study are listed in the bibliography under the authors' names.

The autobiography of Father Gapon must be used with caution. It is in fact not only a considered recollection of the past, but also a political statement. In addition, Gapon was paid a large sum for producing it, and that it should be speedily completed was of importance to both the publisher and the author. However, with allowance for obvious subjectivity, the memoirs constitute an important document, accurate in most details when checked against avail-

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able sources. As a prime example, Gapon reports having received money from the police on several occasions, and significantly all subsequent documents refer precisely to these occasions and to no others. Furthermore, his earlier statements to the press and expressions of views agree fully with the claims of his reminiscences.

Gapon's recollection of developments becomes more confused and hazy as he approaches the events of January, and this would seem to indicate the heavy pressure on him and the rapidity of developments, which he could hardly hope to control. For this period he appears to have relied heavily on the émigré press. It should also be noted that the memoirs do not reflect his own style; they were taken down orally and put into English. In the absence of documents, and in view of Gapon's conversion to the revolutionary faith, it seems natural that he should make use of the revolutionary press, the ideas of which were thus deeply imprinted on his work. Since he did not know English, as he himself states in his autobiography, and given his lack of experience in these matters, he must have relied heavily on his collaborator, who undoubtedly was given considerable latitude in his work. Furthermore, the entire work was completed in a mere couple of months. Careful editing would have greatly improved it and would have eliminated some obvious inconsistencies and errors.

The autobiography was written in the early summer months of 1905, was serialized in *The Strand Magazine*, and published under the title *The Story of My Life* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1905). At the same time it appeared in French, first in *Le Monde moderne*, then under a separate title, *Memoires du pape Gapone*, published by Felix Juven, translated by Colette Yver. Because of censorship the first extensive Russian translation did not appear until 1918, and then anonymously under the title, *Zapiski Georgiia Gapona. Ocherk rabocheho dvizheniia v Rossii 1900-kh g.g.*; this was an abridged translation of the English publication. Shorter narratives and excerpts from the memoirs appeared in various Russian serial publications, as, for example, in the news-



paper *Iuzhnye zapiski*, no. 46, 1905, in *Novyi zhurnal literatury, nauki i iskusstva*, no. 1, 1906, and an article by G. L. I., "Begstvo Gapon iz Rossii," in *Istoricheskii vestnik*, no. 2, 1906. Another Russian translation was published in Berlin in 1925, but in the same year a full new translation edited and annotated by A. A. Shilov was published in Leningrad under the title *Istoriia moei zhizni*. This full translation from the English edition was edited by a scholar of the period, who appended very valuable notes and comments and included numerous previously unpublished documents. It is the most valuable edition of the memoirs and is the one used here, except when the translation varies from the English version, which must be considered the "original."

Abbreviations used frequently throughout the bibliography are:

KA	<i>Krasnyi arkhiv</i>
KL	<i>Krasnaia letopis'</i>
PR	<i>Proletarskaia revoliutsiia</i>
RR	<i>Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia</i>
RSDRP	Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party
1905	N. E. Trusova <i>et al.</i> , eds., <i>Nachalo pervoi russkoi revoliutsii</i> , the first volume of the collection edited by A. M. Pankratova <i>et al.</i> , <i>Revoliutsiia 1905-1907 gg. v Rossii: Dokumenty i materialy</i> .

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A considerable number of anthologies, or books of readings, on Bloody Sunday and Gaponovshchina have been published in the Soviet Union. They usually contain excerpts from Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders, some eyewitness accounts, accounts of Gapon's assistants, primary sources such as the Petition, leaflets, police reports, and so forth, and usually conclude with Rutenberg's account of Gapon's betrayal and murder. These collections are varied in quality and size; some are useful, while others are repetitive and superficial. A few contain material not available elsewhere. Many of the anthologies contain good bibliographies. Listed below are some of the better and more serious compilations, but it should be kept in mind that most, if not all, have been written from one point of view: to show that the Bolshevik party was the real representative of the workers' interests, and that Gapon was an agent provocateur.

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